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No Crinoline-Covered Lady: Stardom, Agency, and the Career of Barbara Stanwyck



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DPhil thesis submitted to the University of Sussex

March 2011

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:.....

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the following people for all their support, feedback, and encouragement: Dr. Frank Krutnik, Dr. Thomas Austin, Dr. Michael Hammond, Dr. Niall Richardson, my PhD-buddy Rosemary Shirley, Sharif Mowlabocus, the DPhil student organizers of the MeCCSA Postgraduate Conference 2008, Constance McCormick-Van Wyck, Jenny Romero at the Margaret Herrick Library, Sandra Joy Lee and Jonathan Auxier at the Warner Bros. Archives, Ned Comstock at the Cinematic Arts Library and Dace Taube at the Regional History Center at the University of Southern California, staff at the BFI, University of Sussex Library and Special Collections, Paley Center in New York and Los Angeles, EYE Film Instituut Nederland library, my DPhil friends in the School of Media, Film, and Music, Nick Till, Sarah Maddox, Tamar Jeffers McDonald, Martin Shingler, Kate & Rachel, Charlotte, and Willemijn.

I would also like to thank my parents Berry and Ans Berkvens for continuous enthusiasm and encouragement throughout the project. I dedicate this thesis to you.

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

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No Crinoline-Covered Lady:
Stardom, Agency, and the Career of Barbara Stanwyck

SUMMARY

This thesis examines how Hollywood's female star images were created, promoted, and sold to the public, using a case study of Barbara Stanwyck. The research focuses in particular on the models of womanhood Stanwyck offered, her position as a female star in the male-controlled film industry, and her shifting image from the start of her career in 1930 until her final television performance in a continuing-character series in 1969. The research takes a different look at star studies as it is conventionally approached within the discipline of film studies. I use a historical approach that examines stars not just as images but also as part of a film's production, distribution, and exhibition process. I also attempt to develop the dominant approach of examining stars as images by using the historical approach to demonstrate how star images were created and promoted, and I argue that an understanding of these historical and industrial processes provides a better knowledge of the fashionability of stars. In writing the thesis I therefore rely on previously unused primary materials found in various papers and archival collections, fan magazines, and newspapers. The analysis of these materials demonstrates the relationship between Stanwyck's image and the cultural and industrial events or trends of the time by locating the image in its original context. The chapters are arranged chronologically by decade, but they are primarily organized around a key historical, social, or industrial aspect that describes the focus of that decade. In my conclusion I offer explanations for the shifts in Stanwyck's fashionability and I consider the usefulness of the historical approach to understand star images.

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Introduction

“The actress played a rich mix of characterizations in more than 80 films but developed a distinctive image as a gutsy, self-reliant and self-assured woman whose husky voice and cool exterior usually masked a warm heart.”

In his obituary for film star Barbara Stanwyck (1907-1990), writer Peter Flint describes a particular image that supposedly characterized Stanwyck, and as such set her apart from other stars (A17). A star image is generally considered as a cluster of signs and meanings that circulate across and outside of films. According to Richard Dyer these images are highly manipulated texts that have been fabricated. A star can therefore only be known through media texts such as films, fan magazines, papers, etc. (*Stars* 1). A star image encompasses various distinct “identities” such as the “real” biographical person (i.e. Stanwyck was born Ruby Stevens), the performer (who uses his or her expertise to impersonate a character), the type that the star plays across films (i.e. the “gutsy, self-reliant” women Stanwyck played), and the characters (i.e. Phyllis Dietrichson in *Double Indemnity* [d. Billy Wilder, US, 1944]) (*Stars* 161). One of the attractions of a star image is the search for the “real person” behind the media-constructed façade but, according to Dyer, it is impossible to know this “real person” (*Stars* 1). Consequently, when discussing a star’s off-screen life, for example, this refers to a mediated discourse about what the star does when he or she is not performing in a film. A star’s private life should therefore be considered the star’s *public* private life.

My thesis examines the creation and promotion of Barbara Stanwyck’s star image from 1930 (when she became a film star) to 1969 (when she no longer regularly appeared in films or on television). Every studio in the classical Hollywood period cultivated a large stable of female stars. This was to cater for the supposedly largely female audience that saw these stars as role models (Barbas 64). I chose Stanwyck as my case study because my goal is to examine a star with a long career in the public eye and within whose career it is possible to see shifting perspectives of female identity and shifts in image over time. Stanwyck achieved prominence in 1930 as a film star and her film career lasted until 1964, after which she continued a healthy career in television. The length of her career intrigues me, as well as Stanwyck’s continuous popularity over several decades and her transition from film to television. Stanwyck was also one of the first female performers to become freelance. This means that, more than contract stars, Stanwyck perhaps had to be more conscious of her image, but she would also have had more freedom to change it; she did not have a major studio making career and image-related decisions for her. Contract stars such as Bette Davis and Joan Crawford have been subject to academic scrutiny because information about them is readily available courtesy of the studios

they worked for. Stanwyck has received less (academic) attention, possibly because she was not tied to a studio for a long period of time and therefore information about her is not easily available.

Although Stanwyck died in 1990, images of her still live on. These circulate, for example, in the seven Stanwyck DVD box sets that have come out since 2006, as well as in box sets that only include one or two of her films.¹ The available images of Stanwyck, however, are not unlimited. They are limited because there were only a restricted number of meanings within Stanwyck's image when she was working in film and television, and from those only a small number is available to today's audiences. This is the result of canonization; of the types of Stanwyck films that have been released--e.g. films noirs, "pre-code" films, and dramas--and the limited descriptions in populist historical accounts and in the four biographies about Stanwyck.² These biographies give a certain perspective on Stanwyck's image. Star biographies often do not simply recount the story of a star's life as it was known to the public, but attempt to give the audience a look at the person "behind" the star. When I tell people that I am writing about Stanwyck, many assume that I am writing a biography. Unlike the biography my thesis is not looking for some form of "truth" about Stanwyck, nor does the thesis aim to uncover some hidden scandal in Stanwyck's off-screen life. As such, Jane Ellen Wayne's latest biography, The Life and Loves of Barbara Stanwyck, attempts to reveal that Stanwyck was a woman who "swore like a sailor, chain smoked, and was an alcoholic" (book jacket). Biographer Axel Madsen sought to prove another "truth" about Stanwyck that certain other populist writers have also tried: he "outed" Stanwyck as a lesbian (Madsen; Hadleigh; Hart). According to reviewers of Madsen's book, however, this hypothesis was "an obsession" of the author (Weiskind J4). Reviewer Joel Greenberg, for example, notes that Madsen is "least satisfactory when dealing with Stanwyck's ambiguous sexuality. It's true that she often played strong and domineering characters and according to Madsen, was also 'a lifelong icon of gay women.' That's hardly sufficient justification for branding her a lesbian, which Madsen almost does [. . .]" (21). Stanwyck never identified herself as a lesbian and Madsen's hypothesis therefore cannot be proved. The idea that Stanwyck could have been a closeted lesbian therefore is part of the image created about her especially after her death, but it was not a visible part of Stanwyck's image during her career.

Stanwyck's "distinctive image," as Flint describes it, can particularly be read from the characters Stanwyck played during her fifty-year career, but the image is not continuous across this period. Stanwyck's career can roughly be divided into five decades, each with a different spin on the image of a "gutsy, self-reliant and self-assured woman." Her image makes Stanwyck similar to other female stars, but it also sets her apart. Stanwyck was a part of the old

Hollywood generation (like Bette Davis and Joan Crawford for example), but she was also distinct from her contemporaries. For example, as a freelance star Stanwyck occupied an eccentric position in relation to the studio system where the common practice was for stars to be employed on contracts that could last up to seven years. Unlike most female film stars of her generation, Stanwyck was hardly ever promoted as glamorous or costumed in gowns that took attention away from her performance. More importantly, whereas Stanwyck was arguably as big a star as Davis or Crawford, less attention is paid to Stanwyck's image, fashionability, and independence in her career.

By looking at this particular star, I unearth Stanwyck's position as a woman in the Hollywood film industry and the agency she had in her career. Because Stanwyck was a freelance star, I also take a "backstage look" at Stanwyck as a worker in the male-controlled film industry and scrutinize a number of contracts between Stanwyck and several producers to reveal how Stanwyck and her agents managed her image. I also examine the models of womanhood Stanwyck offered audiences, both through the characters she played and her off-screen image, and the external commentary on these two elements. By examining the relationship between Stanwyck's image and the industrial and historical contexts in which it was produced, I hope to give a broader understanding of the construction and promotion of female star images in the classical Hollywood period. This thesis will be the first academic study that focuses exclusively on Stanwyck. She is featured in academic sources about certain films (e.g. women's pictures and films noirs), but there is no academic investigation of her career or image. Few academic studies focus on a specific star's image. Most research about female stars discusses the function and images of their characters in films, but not the images of the stars (Stacey, *Star Gazing* 11). Unlike many other star analyses, my research uses a historical approach, drawing on previously unearthed primary materials to develop new understandings of the construction of Stanwyck's image. By considering this star in connection to both industry and society over a particular period of time, it is possible to gain a greater understanding of film and cultural history.

Literature Review and Research Approach

This literature review outlines the central frameworks, key arguments, and dominant approaches to the study of stars. I do not intend to provide an exhaustive overview of these sources, but rather draw attention to the key sources that have influenced my own research. This includes, on the one hand, approaches that I find problematic and incomplete for the analysis of a star image, and on the other hand emerging ideas and arguments that I aim to develop and

build upon in the following chapters of this thesis. As such, I will be highlighting areas of neglect that I am hoping to fill through my study of Stanwyck's star image.

The purpose of this literature review is to explain why I use a historical approach to study the construction and promotion of Stanwyck's image, and how my research is positioned in the current field of star studies. I have divided my literature review in two parts. First, I explain why I decided to use this approach for my research, based on an evaluation of the various research methods to study stars. There is a large academic debate that informs my research and I focus here on Richard Dyer's semiotic form of analysis and on various historical approaches which combine the most important studies in the field. Because I also examine the images of womanhood that Stanwyck offered her fans, I review the various approaches that feminist film scholars have taken in their analyses of women in film. Nonetheless, as Jackie Stacey argues, feminist film scholars have paid little attention to how female film stars function outside the filmic text (*Star Gazing* 11). This demonstrates my own work as adding an important dimension to the field of feminist film studies. The second part of the literature review consists of a critical summary of primary resources (such as films and archives) that I use in my research. Because my research is based on the use of primary materials to situate Stanwyck's image in the context in which it was created, a discussion of these sources is particularly important to verify my research approach. Finally, I will discuss how the various approaches underpin my own research.

As my thesis focuses on the construction and promotion of images in the classical Hollywood era, I do not discuss audiences' reception of the images. Nor do I consider stars from different time periods or different cinemas. Both contemporary American and European celebrities have their own vast bodies of works, and the different historical periods and cultures would be difficult to conceptualize in addition to the agendas for this thesis. Whilst choosing to focus on a particular historical period and star, I have considered that there are other female stars that went through similar processes as those discussed in the thesis. Therefore, it should be noted that I do not wish to sign off my approach as being exclusively applicable or restricted to Stanwyck. I envisage that my approach may be useful and adaptable when analyzing other stars, both within the classical Hollywood era and outside of it.

Conceptualizing film stardom

By 1910 the identification of film performers was widespread in the American film industry. In that same year the first fan magazines were born and these provided information such as performers' names and upcoming appearances (Staiger, "Hollywood 1930" 99). In his book *Picture Personalities*, Richard deCordova describes the emergence of the star in the

American film industry through the circulation of various types of information about film performers (98). It is generally agreed that stars are not just known for their performances in films, but also for the off-screen information that circulates about them in various media texts such as promotional articles, interviews, and gossip (Dyer, Stars 12-13; Naremore, Acting 157). It was not until 1913, however, that information about performers' off-screen lives became just as or even more important than their performance: film performers thereby became stars. Dyer argues that star images were purposeful created so that audiences could identify with a star (Stars 1). The image gave the star a unique identity and this enabled studios to differentiate and promote their films through stars. Stars were also represented as distinctly different people from the film audience. With their beauty, wealth, and lifestyle, stars embodied the glamour and attraction of the film industry (Dyer, Stars 35-46). According to Dyer, however, stars were special yet simultaneously ordinary ("like us") because they were presented as "normal" people with families, hobbies, and problems (Stars 43). This paradox is part of the appeal of stardom and as such plays an important part in the production, distribution, and exhibition of films.

Within the field of film studies, stardom has received considerable attention. However, until the 1980s the study of stars was largely neglected. According to Jeremy Butler in his article "The Star System and Hollywood," until the 1980s film studies scholars were mostly concerned with technical aspects used to express meaning and with the justification of film as an art form. Early film studies' reliance upon these aspects of film complicated the examination into the significance of stars. Stars were simply seen as the embodiment of the character and it was the character's position in the narrative that was important. Butler notes that the study of stars evolved from discussions of other cinematic phenomena such as authorship and the images of women in film (342-343). Since Dyer's book Stars from 1979, and under the influence of cultural studies, semiotics, and psychoanalysis, the star has become an object of scholarly study (Butler 343).

More recently, scholars such as Paul McDonald and Danae Clark have argued that stars are not just images, but also workers in the film industry and as such part of the labour force of film production (McDonald, Star System 5; Clark 12). This approach towards the "actor as worker" no longer looks at the star as a filmic object, but also as part of the workers who produce the meaning of a film (Clark 12). This complicates the nature of stardom further. To consider a star as part of a historic, industrial system implies a historical rather than a semiotic perspective on the star phenomenon.

Part 1: The Star Phenomenon

Since the 1980s, the star has predominantly been explored for its social significance. Earlier work on the development of stardom by Edgar Morin and Alexander Walker suggests that silent film stars were conceived as heroes, models, gods and goddesses. Stars were “untouchable,” almost otherworldly people (Walker 233; Morin 102). Richard Schickel argues that once the talkies arrived, however, the voices of the film stars made them “as real as the audiences watching them” (qtd. in Walker 235). Over the past thirty years, film studies scholarship has favoured certain approaches to the study of stardom, most notably the textual analysis of star images. This approach builds on Dyer’s canonical work *Stars*, which sets out a strategy for studying the star phenomenon and suggests a semiotic framework with which to read stars as signs or images. In the following sections I will discuss three approaches to star studies: the semiotic, the historical, and the feminist approach.

Star as image

Although the study of stardom commenced before the 1980s (e.g. Boorstin 1961; Lowenthal 1961; Walker 1970), Dyer’s *Stars* has had a seminal influence on the field and continues to be a canonical text. It was the first work to elaborate “some kind of theory of the [star] phenomenon and [to use] this theory to inform empirical investigation of it” (1). Dyer combines semiotic and sociological approaches that, he argues, are mutually interdependent. A novel concept in his theory is the notion of the “star text” and the idea that star images are created not just by film texts, but also through other media texts such as promotional materials, publicity, and commentaries (*Stars* 60). Star performances in combination with the star’s presence in extra-filmic texts create a “star text” that can be explored across a combination of signs. Dyer grounds his theory in a form of semiotics by suggesting that stars should be read “in terms of their signification,” as clusters of signs (*Stars* 2). McDonald summarizes this approach as the investigation of how “cinema circulates the images of individual film performers and how these images may influence the ways in which we think of the identity of ourselves and others” (“Reconceptualising” 176). Dyer proposes that stars exist in particular ideological and psychological contexts. He argues that star images expose or mask ideological contradictions, which the image seeks to manage or resolve. Because a star image is made up of different media texts that mask and displace certain ideological features, the audience can read different meanings in a star image. According to Dyer, a star can thus only be known through his or her constructed image.

In his essay “Stars as a Cinematic Phenomenon,” John Ellis argues that film stardom is different from other forms of stardom, particularly television stardom. He notes that film stars are available but unattainable for audiences, whereas television stars are more “immediate”

(301). According to Ellis television presents a personality which, he argues, is “someone who is famous for being famous only in so far as he or she makes frequent television appearances” (301). He suggests that television stars are “agreeable voids” rather than “sites of conflicting meanings” that film stars are (302). Ellis thus denies the existence of stars on television. In his book Visible Fictions Ellis further builds on his and Dyer’s theories of semiotics and ideology and adds that the film star image should be characterized as incoherent (93). Ellis argues that a star image is never complete when it is read in non-filmic texts, but that it is only completed by the filmic text. Non-filmic texts provide only the voice or only the face of a star, whereas the film combines all features. Ellis notes that advertising and publicity invite audiences to the cinema to complete the star image that they have created beforehand from various other media (93). Barry King on the other hand, argues that fans see the film first and that this image of a star is completed by non-filmic texts. He notes that after seeing the film, the audience wants to “tear the star from the submerging pull of the diegesis and narrative,” so that they can consider the image without interruption of the narrative (“Articulating” 141). Both Ellis and King (and most other star studies scholars), however, agree with Dyer that a star image is not only how the star appears in films, but that a variety of texts is necessary to construct a star image.

Dyer’s semiotic approach remains important, particularly in film studies, but it has nonetheless received ample criticism. Much of the early critique relates to Dyer’s neglect of the audience, and the marginalisation of political economy and screen acting in his research (e.g. McDonald, “Reconceptualising”). Pam Cook, in her Screen article “Star Signs,” notes that Dyer concentrates only “on the star as an object phenomenon outside the process of production of meaning” (82). McDonald and Martin Barker also argue that Dyer emphasizes the approach to stars as a phenomenon of consumption over his approach to stars as the phenomenon of production (McDonald, Star System 2; Barker 6). Alan Lovell critiques Dyer’s work because it emphasises the relation between star and ideology. Lovell argues that stars are unlikely candidates to carry out ideological tasks because their superficiality prevents them from having a stable, unified identity. He notes that stars are the opposite of the solid bourgeois individual and their instability means that they can shift between meanings (“I Went” 261).

In answer to these critiques, Dyer, in his book Heavenly Bodies, attempts to re-conceptualise and clarify his ideas. This book is structured around three case studies that make Dyer’s theory more accessible. In Heavenly Bodies he contextualises the star images of Marilyn Monroe, Paul Robeson, and Judy Garland through readings of their films and other media texts. Dyer examines how the stars relate to aspects of social life--sexuality, race, and gender. This book is another key text in the field of star analysis as it explains the different ways stars can correlate to particular (marginalized) groups in society. According to Su Holmes, Dyer fosters a

methodological approach for contextual readings of the star image, which seems to have influenced nearly all such readings since (11-12). These readings thus examine the star as an image with a given set of meanings, but they do not investigate how the image was constructed so that it can display these meanings. In answer to this and other “gaps” in Dyer’s work, scholars such as McDonald, King, and Clark have been examining stars as part of a particular historical period and a particular industry. This historical approach will be discussed in the next section.

The star in historical context

The historical approach has not been described as such within the field of star studies, but I use the term here to point to those methods that use historical contexts to study stars and stardom. In this section I follow McDonald’s lead and focus on studies that examine stars as capital and as labour (*Star System* 8-13). Through historical research, both these concepts place stars in the historical and industrial contexts in which they were created.

Star as Capital

From an industrial perspective, stars can be seen as an investment; a star image is a form of capital because it can be used to assure profits and secure investments from companies outside the film industry. Stars are a marketing tool and their “images are promoted with the intention of trying to effect the entertainment market” (McDonald, *Star System* 10). McDonald states that “to speak of stardom in Hollywood as a system is to draw attention to how the American film business has employed [. . .] regular strategies for exploiting star performers in the production and consumption of films” (*Star System* 1). It is thus necessary to study the star system and its workings in order to understand the function of stars as capital and thus the reasons for the promotion of stars. deCordova argues that the star system is “central to the functioning of the American cinema as a social institution,” with the purpose “to differentiate stars” (1, 10). The star system was a process through which studios created, promoted, and exploited film stars. Studios would sign (unknown) actors and create a unique image for them (changing, for example, name, biography, and even physical appearance). Through the creation of individual images, studios could use these stars to differentiate their products and attract audiences to their films. In debates about the star system, stars are often referred to as a commodity and a form of capital, because they were purposely manufactured and exploited to profit the studios that owned them (Klaprat 351; McDonald, *Star System* 5). One of the few and most notable essays on this topic is Cathy Klaprat’s “The Star as Marketing Strategy.”

Klaprat examines Bette Davis's appearances during her early career at Warner Bros. According to Klaprat, the studio experimented with different roles for Davis until it found the "perfect match" between the persona, the narrative character, and consumer demand. Klaprat argues that the function of the star in the industrial process is that of product differentiation (355). By looking at Davis from an industrial and historical perspective (Klaprat uses primary materials such as studio publicity to argue her point), she describes how Davis's image changed between 1932 and 1935 so that Warner Bros. could find her a unique personality with which to market and differentiate its films from similar films by rival studios. Klaprat also connects the film narrative to the star image. She notes that narratives were created or adapted to fit the star's personality or type (370). This way, she argues, the market for films was stabilized, because most of the star vehicles for a particular star were of similar content. However, to keep the audience interested in the star, studios would also use the practice of off-casting. According to Klaprat, this was an important means to extend the box office potential of a star because "the studio diversified the traits of its product while at the same time invoking the familiar expectations associated with star differentiation" (372). However, differentiation did not always secure box office success. Klaprat's argument that stars stabilized the market should therefore be used with caution. The argument does suggest that stars can potentially stabilize the film market (McDonald, *Star System* 11).

Star as Labour

In 1907, articles appeared in the trade papers that foregrounded human labour in film production. These articles discussed the film performer as part of the labour force in the same way as they discussed, for example, cameramen (deCordova 32). Although stars and film actors have been considered by the industry as part of the labour force, scholarly research has only been examining the place and meaning of stars in the industry since the 1990s. This approach means a move away from the aesthetic tradition toward a more practical examination of the actor as an agent in the construction of an individual star image, and as such underpins my examination of Stanwyck. The most influential studies that use this perspective include, but are not limited to, Barry King's "Stardom as an Occupation," Clark's *Negotiating Hollywood*, and Adrienne McLean's *Being Rita Hayworth*. According to Clark, Dyer's semiotic approach (which fits in the aesthetic tradition) fixates on the image. This means that the emphasis is on the star image as a sign or an object, and the actor (in his or her function as worker behind that image) is marginalized, placing the star's ability to control his or her own performance into question (Clark 8). Instead, Clark and King argue that a star should be examined as a "social subject who works and is positioned within the acting profession" (Clark 121).

King's "Stardom as an Occupation" is one of the earliest essays to approach stardom as a form of labour. King argues that stardom should be seen as "part of the occupation of film acting," and he defines occupation as "part of the division of labour" ("Stardom" 155). The purpose of King's essay is to "lay out some of the fundamental features of stardom as part of the occupation of film acting in Hollywood" ("Stardom" 155). He agrees with Janet Staiger's argument that under a detailed division of labour every part of the labour force becomes a specialisation in the hierarchal system of film production (Staiger, "Hollywood 1930" 91). In this division of labour, King argues, actors have a performance specialisation. They have to memorize their lines, they have to perform in front of the camera, they have to pose for publicity photos and give interviews to promote the film. Many performers will only be involved in the (pre-) production process, but stars have a specialisation that goes further and which is marked by their hierarchal status (King, "Stardom" 157; McDonald, Star System 9). For example, producers attempt to finance a film by attaching a star's name to the project and once the film is made, the star is expected to promote the film and attract audiences so that the film can make a profit. For the star, promotional work also enhances his or her commercial value by setting him or her apart from other performers in the film who are not so well-known and are thus not required to do as much promotional work.

As one of the "originators" of the "actor as labour" approach, King argues furthermore that stardom is as much a process of agency as it is a "determined effect of the industry's economic system of managing and differentiating the acting profession" ("Stardom" 157). This indicates that to write about a historical film star, one should consider the signs that indicate his or her confidence in or resistance to the industry's labour power. This is especially interesting in Stanwyck's case because, as a freelance actress she was in an eccentric position in relation to the studio system, and this gave her her much desired freedom as a star (Perry 43). Contract stars, on the other hand, had less control over their image and career. They were employed by a studio and that studio legally owned the star's image. Although King's argument seems to work on a theoretical level, he does not refer to actual star contracts to underpin his claims regarding labour conditions and image ownership. His argument is useful in my research, in particular in my examination of Stanwyck as a freelance worker in chapter two.

Furthering King's notion of the actor as worker, Clark convincingly argues that an actor's subjectivity should be theorised primarily in relation to the production process of the cinema because actors are defined in relation to this specific form of employment (13). The purpose of her book Negotiating Hollywood is "to establish a cultural studies framework" for actors' labour (3). Clark focuses mainly on Hollywood labour power in the early 1930s, but her approach is useful for examining stars as subjects at any time during the studio system.

According to Clark, the “actor as worker” should be seen as a site of “intersecting discourses involving the sale of one’s labor power to the cinematic institution, the negotiation of that power in terms of work performance and image construction and the embodiment of one’s image (on-screen and off-screen) as it becomes picked up and circulated in filmic and extra-filmic discourse” (12). Although Clark argues for a more historical approach to the study of stars/actors as workers, the historical research in her book is limited. The primary research is restricted to a few archival sources and the lack of historical materials weakens her argument for the necessity of historical research. Clark’s “actor as worker” approach has rarely been put into practice through an actual analysis of a star image, but her approach is a sound base to examine the manufacturing of a particular star’s image, i.e. how the traits and meanings that Dyer takes as given become part of the star’s image.

The only scholar to have thus far attempted to put the “actor as labour” theory into practice is McLean. In her book Being Rita Hayworth, McLean examines the identity and labour in the construction of Rita Hayworth’s star image through the use of primary materials. McLean thus does not read a star image as given, but examines how it was created and profiles Hayworth’s agency in this process. McLean further focuses on Hayworth as a worker, a dancer in musical films, and an active agent in her own career. The book is significant because it addresses a gap in current star studies: exploring how a particular star was constructed by the Hollywood studio system. The research demonstrates the relationship between the star’s images and her “real” self, as well as detailing how the star’s original meaning can be different from how we read her today.

This book has been one of the main inspirations for my own work. I follow McLean’s approach to examine how Stanwyck’s image was constructed and promoted. My research, however, is less concerned with Stanwyck as worker (unlike McLean I devote only one chapter specifically to this). In addition, my research examines the connection between the models of womanhood that Stanwyck offered her fans and the positions of women in American society at the time, which is not part of McLean’s agenda. Her research is conducted from an industrial and feminist perspective, whereas I approach my research from a historical, social, and cultural point of view. I will, however, employ a feminist perspective when I examine the models of womanhood Stanwyck offered her fans, but this is secondary to my historical approach. In the next section I discuss the various perspectives on women in film within feminist film theory.

Feminist film theory

Feminist studies holds a special place in star studies. Feminist film scholars were among the first to consider the place of female stars in the film text by focusing predominantly on the

function and image of women in film. There are, however, few feminist studies that focus particularly on female stars. This seems rather odd, as an analysis of a female star could be an understandable focus for the analysis of the construction of idealised femininities within patriarchal culture.

Early feminist film scholars in the 1970s were divided between two strands of feminist criticism: the “images of women” approach and the “women as images” approach (Thornham 2). The focus of the former approach (which became popular in the early 1970s) was on the function of female characters as a reflection of a society’s view of women. Marjorie Rosen’s Popcorn Venus is one of the first and most well-known examples of this “images of women” approach. In her book, Rosen examines female stars in every decade and attempts to account for the changes in female onscreen images in terms of women’s place in society at any one time. She argues that films not only reflect social structures and changes, they also misrepresent them according to the fantasies of their male creators (Rosen 12; S. Smith 10). This leads Rosen to pose many questions such as why sexism in film continued in one form or another from decade to decade, and why producers in the 1930s did not show existing conditions in films. Unfortunately, these and other questions are not followed up by exploration or analysis, therefore limiting Rosen’s examination (Kaplan, “Popcorn”).

Molly Haskell’s From Reverence to Rape also examines images of women in film, by charting the shifts in women’s images from the 1920s through the 1970s. Haskell, however, rejects the idea that film merely functions as a “rich field for the mining of female stereotypes” (30). She argues that films should not be examined as simply a reflection of society, but rather in the context and time in which they were made. Haskell discusses female stars in Hollywood cinema as socially determined stereotypes because, she argues, “stereotypes existed in society” and today’s audiences should not read films from the 1930s and 1940s with today’s knowledge (30). This is an interesting argument, but unfortunately her book (as is Rosen’s) is restricted to analyses of characters and their narrative treatment: Haskell does not examine the images of the stars outside the filmic texts. It is therefore difficult to read her work as moving beyond the notion of “film as mirror of society.” The “images of women” approach is similar to Dyer’s “star as image” approach, as both examine stars/characters and their relation to social types in society. This approach has been criticized for its reliance upon the reflection of ideology: the images of women in film reflect their positions in their contemporary society. Haskell and Rosen claim that film is a mirror to reality, but in the late 1970s other feminist film scholars argued that film is an artificial construct which transforms reality through disguise and displacement (Johnston 214). Haskell’s and Rosen’s books are often dismissed by scholars “as popularized and theoretically unsophisticated histories” (Petro 12).

Other critiques on the “images of women” approach include its failure to take into account other elements of film, such as lighting, camera angles, etc. (Chaudhuri 8). Instead, feminist theorists such as Claire Johnston and Laura Mulvey tried to “come to terms with *how* films mean--to move beyond regarding the image to analyzing the structure, codes, the general subtext of the works” by using aesthetic tools like semiotics and psychoanalysis to examine “women as images” (Rich 45). This method examines how the sign “woman” functions within the film text and how women are fixed in ideology which is defined in terms of patriarchy. Mulvey’s essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” was one of the first and most notable studies that discussed the relation between women and the pleasures of film. Mulvey suggests psychoanalytic theory to examine structures of identification, pleasure, and desire in cinema. The essay does not deal directly with stardom or female stars, but it looks at the position of women in narrative (Hollywood) cinema and discusses the relation between spectator and star/actor/image. For example, Mulvey discusses Joseph Sternberg’s use of Marlene Dietrich as an example that women are “to be looked at” in classical Hollywood cinema, but she does not discuss Dietrich’s stardom, only her function as a female star in Sternberg’s films (“Visual Pleasure” 43-44). Mulvey does argue, however, that the notion of pleasure is crucial in the analysis of a star image--fans gain a certain pleasure from watching stars, otherwise there would be no stars at all. In the essay, Mulvey proposes that there are two aspects of visual pleasure in cinema: “The first, scopophilic, arises from pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight. The second, developed through narcissism and the constitution of the ego, comes from identification with the image seen” (“Visual Pleasure” 39). Within this paradigm, pleasure in looking is divided between male/active and female/passive, which characterizes the actress by what Mulvey terms her “to-be-looked-at-ness” (“Visual Pleasure” 40). According to Mulvey there are two modes of looking for film audiences: voyeuristic and fetishistic. Voyeuristic looking involves the controlling gaze and has associations with sadism. Fetishistic looking involves “the substitution of a fetish object or turning the represented figure itself into a fetish” (“Visual Pleasure” 42). In this argument, the actress becomes a fetishistic object of spectacle of the voyeuristic male gaze, and the male actor serves as the gazer, an identification figure for the spectator. Moreover, Mulvey states that the point of view of the camera is essentially heterosexual and male. The female viewer therefore has to adopt the male gaze of looking at the woman as a spectacle and thus adopt an identity other than her own (“Visual Pleasure” 41).

Mulvey’s model has been heavily criticised on a number of different grounds. Both Steve Neale and Dyer challenged the idea that the male is never sexually objectified in Hollywood cinema and argued that the male is not always in control of the gaze (“Masculinity”

254-260; Stars 188). E. Ann Kaplan and Kaja Silverman (among others) argued that the gaze could be adopted by both male and female subjects (Kaplan, "Introduction"). Other feminist scholars such as Miriam Hansen and Gaylyn Studlar objected to the fixity of the association of passivity with femininity and activity with masculinity, and a failure to account for the female spectator. Stacey wondered if women necessarily have to take up a feminine spectator position and men a male spectator position, especially in the case of the male as an erotic object ("Desperately" 245). She also argued for more audience research to underpin Mulvey's arguments with empirical data (245). Mulvey responded to these criticisms in a follow-up article "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by King Vidor's Duel in the Sun," in which she argued that "Visual Pleasure" was simply intended to provoke ("Afterthoughts" 127). In the essay, she reconsiders the place of the female spectator and argues that the female spectator can indeed identify with the active, masculine position, but that this is a form of "transvestite" identification that is not natural to women (125). "Afterthoughts" also received much critique, the majority of which related to its universalizing tendencies that do not account for marginalized or oppressed groups of spectators (Chaudhuri 44).

As a response to the (historical) limitations of psychoanalytic feminist film theory, sociologically trained feminist film scholars combined textual analysis with research on historical and sociological contexts to study female stars. These scholars (such as Mary Ann Doane and Stacey) focus on the construction of female identity and the struggle of the female subject who tries to define herself in patriarchal society. They argue that a star is "a construction, a product of culture, industrially manufactured, and prefabricated by men" (Gaines, "Introduction" 1). Feminists increasingly turned to re-organizing film history through the history of consumer capitalism (Petro 19). A woman is no longer seen as just a spectator, but as a consumer of film. Female stars are thus regarded in relation to consumption, as a living commercial for fashion and beauty products (see Charles Eckert's "The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window"). This can be explained through the association of the female star with physical beauty and the glamorous roles most actresses played in the 1930s and 1940s. These images of wealth and beauty encouraged female fans to buy similar clothes and other luxuries, which was a practical way for women to participate in the film world (Stacey, Star Gazing 80).

Stacey examines this appeal of female film stars to female audiences in her book Star Gazing. The book is based on empirical audience research; through questionnaires and historical letters to film fan magazines, Stacey considers British female fans' memories of and associations with Hollywood stars in the 1940s and 1950s. She thus locates her research in particular social, historical, and cultural contexts. Her findings are largely based on memories of the questionnaire participants; while memories might not be completely reliable, the similarity

of the answers suggests they can be accepted as “valid.” Stacey disagrees with Mulvey’s argument that the gaze is always male and instead argues that the female spectator negotiates a particular relationship with the star image on the screen, which can range from devotion to transcendence to imitation. Despite her critique regarding the usefulness of psychoanalytical theories for spectator studies, Stacey uses these theories to support her arguments about audience identification with stars. This does not undermine her argument, however, but supports it when Stacey argues that there is more than one way for female spectators to enjoy female stars on screen. The study demonstrates how useful Hollywood stars were in providing women with discourses through which they could construct their own identity. Although Stacey focuses on a particular time and place, her findings could be applied to star-audience relationships in different periods.

Another feminist study that examines stars from a historical perspective is Amelie Hastie’s recent book Cupboards of Curiosity about “women, recollection, and film history.” Hastie discloses new possibilities for re-examining the histories of women who were involved in the creation of film (both actresses and directors) and were subsequently marginalised in film history. She discusses these women not as images, but as collectors, historians, and critics. Hastie’s research concentrates on “a reconsideration of [female] authorship, its attendant authority, and the authoring of film history” (14). She does this by using such “texts” as cookbooks, memoirs, and doll houses. Hastie’s study explores the possibility of re-reading archival sources and encourages rethinking of the conventional ideas concerning the theorization of film history. She discusses the labour of her subjects in the silent era and their agency in constructing history (how they defined their own place in the system and in film history). By examining the works that these women created from their own perspective (rather than the studios’), the women are granted agency, and their personal history can be read from these works. The work is significant in the way that it uses the non-standard texts to reveal how they publicise the subjects’ personal lives and achievements.

Part 2: Primary Sources

In the second part of my literature review I consider and discuss the primary sources that I use in my thesis. I use primarily archival sources such as studio files, press books, fan magazines, and other documents related to Stanwyck’s image and career. These primary sources can be considered the main form of “literature” that I use in my research (see appendix D). Since I use a historical approach for my study, my research relies on a different model of interpretation, and therefore a review of the sources is necessary. Information about Stanwyck is dispersed over numerous archives, and unfortunately certain archival materials (in particular Columbia studio’s archive) are unavailable (for more details about this challenge, see chapter

two). I do not believe that this makes the thesis biased: for example, Stanwyck worked most often for Warner Bros. and Paramount during her career and these archives are some of my main sources of information. This original research is what sets my work apart from many other star analyses and it enables me to contextualize Stanwyck's image during her career.

Films and television series

I have been able to view all of Stanwyck's feature films in the period from 1929 to 1964.³ Over the course of my research, a significant number of Stanwyck's films have become commercially available. The ones that were not, I have found on online auction sites, on websites specializing in hard-to-find films, and via colleagues. The discussions of Stanwyck's films in the thesis therefore include films that are not commercially available, which makes the research original. There are certain films (such as Double Indemnity and Stella Dallas [d. King Vidor, US, 1937]) that have been extensively discussed elsewhere, therefore one of my aims is to shed light on films that may have been equally significant or more typical in their time, but that have subsequently been marginalized by the focus on the canonical films. Nonetheless, I have not been able to avoid discussing the canonical films because they often made an impact on Stanwyck's image.

Another key emphasis in this thesis is tracking Stanwyck's work in television which, in common with several of her Hollywood contemporaries, she embraced during the declining years of her career. Many episodes of the television series in which Stanwyck performed in the 1950s and 1960s are unfortunately unavailable at this time. I have been able to view some individual episodes (that feature Stanwyck) of Wagon Train, The Untouchables, and Zane Grey Theater at the Paley Center for Media in Los Angeles and in New York. However, because The Barbara Stanwyck Show (1960-1961) and The Big Valley (1965-1969) were more significant in connection with Stanwyck's image, I have decided to focus on these two series rather than the few individual episodes of other series. From Stanwyck's Western series The Big Valley, only the first and part of the second season are commercially available, but the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Film & Television Archive has copies of most of the episodes from all five seasons of the series. However, not all episodes have been synopsized (either by the UCLA Film & Television Archive or anywhere else) so it is difficult to find "suitable" episodes in UCLA's vast archive. My research for this series therefore focuses on the first and second season.

Stanwyck's own anthology series The Barbara Stanwyck Show has recently been released on DVD, so I have been able to use this series to examine Stanwyck's transition from film to television in the early 1960s. There are only a few episodes missing from this release,

but almost none of these episodes feature Stanwyck and I have read the final scripts of all episodes.

Collections and archives

Most of the archival materials referred to in the thesis are in the Special Collections department of the Margaret Herrick Library at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Los Angeles. I offer a listing and brief review of the collections I use. The Barbara Stanwyck biography files include biographies provided by Stanwyck's PR agent Helen Ferguson, and carbon copies of articles about Stanwyck. Unfortunately, none of the articles specify where they have been printed, or when they were written. References to Stanwyck's recent films in the articles enabled me to roughly date (year and month) most of the articles. Through cross-referencing, I have also found the published versions of some of the articles. The Jack Hirshberg papers contain Paramount publicity stories regarding Stanwyck in the period 1939-1949, and they also include a few biographies. I have not been able to verify whether all stories have actually been used to promote Stanwyck's Paramount films. The Paramount Pictures contract summaries and production files include Stanwyck's contracts to Paramount Pictures in the period 1944-1949, as well as legal correspondence regarding the contracts. The Hal Wallis papers constitute an extensive collection of contracts between Stanwyck and Hal Wallis Productions, and Stanwyck and Paramount Pictures. It also contains correspondence between Stanwyck's agent and Wallis regarding contracts and film production issues, and some private letters from Wallis to Stanwyck from the late 1970s. The William H. Wright papers consist of contracts and correspondence. This collection focuses on The Barbara Stanwyck Show (Wright was one of the producers of the series) and has proved extremely useful when researching the production of Stanwyck's show. Besides contracts and correspondence, the papers also include casting suggestions, financial statements, final scripts of all the episodes and of the various opening and closing speeches.

In addition to the Margaret Herrick Library, I have used various archives at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles. USC houses the Warner Bros. Archives, which contain the records of Warner Bros. Pictures, documenting the period from 1918 through 1968. This collection contains legal, production, story, and publicity files for nearly all of Stanwyck's Warner Bros. films. Especially Stanwyck's legal files and the production and publicity files were useful to understand Stanwyck's place in the film production process. The Constance McCormick Collection at the Cinema-Television Library at USC provided me with scrapbooks of Stanwyck and Robert Taylor, which include (unreferenced) articles from a variety of magazines and newspapers that can no longer be found anywhere else. This is also the case for the clipping files held in the Cinema-Television Library at USC.

Although the files are a jumble of clippings, they provide a wealth of information from mostly American magazines that give an indication of Stanwyck's image during her career. The Hearst Collection in the Special Collections department at USC supplied me with more biographies of Stanwyck, and with articles from the no longer existing Los Angeles Examiner newspaper. Especially the articles by gossip columnist Louella Parsons provided much information about Stanwyck's "private" life.

Other sources relevant to Stanwyck's career

I have also read through every copy of the weekly trade paper Variety, from 1929 to 1970. This trade magazine, aimed at exhibitors and others in the film and other entertainment industries, provided me with advertisements and reviews for films, as well as articles relating to Stanwyck's career (contract negotiations, production information, etc.) and general information about the Hollywood entertainment industry. Fan magazines also form an integral part of my research, although it was difficult to get hold of the older editions. Many of these materials have not been preserved and have often not survived the ravages of time. Anne Morey notes that fan magazines are useful for studying stardom because they "represent a window into a complex audience-industry relationship" as a "dialogue" between fans and the industry (336). Through this dialogue we can examine how fan magazines used information from the industry to feed to the fans. McLean remarks that these magazines are often considered "bad evidence" by historians because they were generated by the "culture industry" (15). Many scholars see fan magazines as "being merely an auxiliary format of consumerism" that "represent a priori the interests of [. . .] Hollywood" (McLean 15; Gaines, "War" 43-46). Examining the past through these magazines, however, is very productive as these magazines are part of the historical period under scrutiny and the main source of information for fans.

The thesis and star studies

Although there are arguably more approaches within the field of star studies, I consider the methods included in this literature review to constitute the major debates in the field. The approach to my own research is a combination of methods considered here. In this section I explain my approach and the place of my own research within the broader field of star studies.

I believe that it is nearly impossible to use one single approach in my examination of Stanwyck's image. For example, to understand what a star means in a particular historical period, one needs to know how and why the star's image was constructed in a certain way, why this image appealed to audiences at the time, and the particulars of that historical period (i.e. the Depression, war, or post-war era). Both the semiotic and the historic approach have their limitations, but as McDonald notes: "either option on its own is inevitably reductive" (Star

System 3). Many studies of individual stars focus on Dyer's semiotic approach of stars as clusters of signs (e.g. Hendler, Pramaggiore). The problem with this approach is that it ignores the industrial and historical aspect of the creation of star images. Rather than only addressing stars as theoretical concepts, I follow the lead of scholars such as McDonald and McLean and take a historical approach by treating stars not just as images, but also as labour and capital situated in a particular industry and historical context.

This historical approach considers a star's image not as a given, but as purposely created by the film industry to differentiate the industry's products and to sell its films. For a star to appeal to his or her fans over a long period of time, the image has to be altered when society (e.g. the position of women) or the film industry (e.g. film production practices) change. To investigate this fashionability of stars, one must examine both the on- and off-screen images of the star not just as a sign (the semiotic method), but also as part of the industry (the historical method) (McDonald, Star System 2).

As I demonstrated, there are various investigations of the nature of stardom, but there is a lack of knowledge about how stars were created within and especially outside the Hollywood studio system. This is a gap that I attempt to fill. A star is often removed from his or her historical period, but to understand how stars were constructed and sold requires examining them in the historical period in which they were active. Most scholars who use the historical approach to theorize stardom agree on this, but the only historical examination of a star that applies this notion is McLean's study of Rita Hayworth. My work shares certain approaches with McLean's work, especially regarding the construction of a star's identity and the cultural and social issues that interact with the star's image. Unlike McLean, I examine a freelance star (rather than a contract star like Hayworth) over a long stretch of time (forty years), including Stanwyck's transition from film to television. My study is the first to examine a freelance film star's image and career over such a long period.

Therefore, at various points in the thesis I use and build upon both the semiotic and the historical methods, although the emphasis is on the historical approach. This way I hope to construct a "complete" idea of Stanwyck as a star. I use the "star as image" approach when I examine the various images that Stanwyck had during her career. I use the "star as labour" approach particularly in chapter two, when I give a behind-the-scenes look at how Stanwyck worked within and outside the star system. This approach also serves my examination where the traits and meanings that are visible in Stanwyck's image come from. I examine how Stanwyck's image was used as a form of capital by looking at the promotion of and changes in her image during her career.

Inextricably linked to the historical approach is the use of primary materials in one's research. Therefore, in writing the thesis, I rely on previously unused primary materials found in various archives, fan magazines, and newspapers. The unearthing of these materials is part of my original contribution to knowledge. Although I do not claim to have read everything that has been published on Stanwyck over the course of her career, certain patterns and themes can be identified across her career which indicates to me that I have examined a representative sampling. The research has also been conducted with an eye to understanding how Stanwyck was similar and different to her contemporaries (e.g. Davis, Crawford, and Olivia de Havilland).

Finally, I will look at the models of womanhood Stanwyck offered her fans. For this, I obviously take a feminist approach by considering models of representation, and I examine Stanwyck as a female worker in the Hollywood film industry. I do not limit my examination to the film texts, as most feminist approaches do, but I also examine the models of womanhood Stanwyck portrayed in her off-screen life. It should be noted, however, that the models I describe are not intrinsically the ones that audiences at the time read into Stanwyck's image. The meanings that can be read into a star image are limited, but not limited to one particular meaning. The models of representation are therefore open to some interpretation.

My research will thus take a different look at star studies as it is conventionally approached within the discipline of film studies. The discussion of the construction of star images and the notion of the actor as worker is a relatively new and under-researched area in film studies. The study of stars is traditionally focused on a semiotic analysis of a star image, but I will approach the construction of a star image as a dynamic process and examine Stanwyck's individual attempts to influence this process. By taking a historical approach--based on the use of original primary materials--to my research, I read Stanwyck's image in the historical and cultural context in which it was constructed.

Thesis Structure

The main chapters of the thesis are arranged chronologically, with the exception of chapter two. Each chapter roughly covers one decade and is constructed around a theme that describes a key historical, social, or cultural dimension of that decade. For example, the chapter that covers the majority of the 1940s has as its central theme the war and post-war eras. The chapter that follows focuses on Stanwyck's fading career in the 1950s and 1960s, etc. This means that, rather than giving a blow-by-blow account of Stanwyck's career, I will focus on several themes that feature prominently in her image during the decades. I reveal how these themes circulate in Stanwyck's image, and how they connect to the dominant, normative images of femininity in US society at particular times.

Chapters one and two are the foundational chapters for the rest of the thesis. Chapter one examines Stanwyck's quick rise to stardom, her collaboration with director Frank Capra, the importance of acting to her star image, and the representations of womanhood she offered during the Depression. Through her collaboration with Capra, Stanwyck quickly grew from a minor Broadway celebrity to a Hollywood film star. Her onscreen characters and her off-screen pre-cinema life "matched." This, according to Dyer, enhances the construction of a character and as such can strengthen audience identification (*Stars* 125-127). I analyze Stanwyck's roles and her importance to Capra's films, as well as her acting. Stanwyck's performance skills played an important part in her image throughout her career, but were most emphasized in the early 1930s. I also examine Stanwyck's off-screen image which, in the early and mid-1930s, was the opposite of her characters in the popular vice films of the time. Stanwyck was promoted as a dedicated housewife to her famous husband vaudeville star Frank Fay at a time when domesticity played an important part in American society. Stanwyck's divorce from Fay coincided with the start of her freelance career and her off-screen image changed from a dedicated spouse, to an independent, hard-working, single mother. In the late 1930s her career went into a slump, but her relationship with MGM matinee-idol Robert Taylor kept her in the public eye.

Unlike the other chapters, chapter two looks not particularly at the construction of Stanwyck's image, but rather at Stanwyck's position as a female star in the Hollywood film industry. This chapter provides a behind-the-scenes look at Stanwyck as a worker and at the use of her star image as an economic asset in contract negotiations. This chapter reveals how Stanwyck and her agents used her star image in her professional life, as well as Stanwyck's involvement in the management of her career. The chapter contains three case studies from Stanwyck's career (1930-1934, 1942, and 1944-1950) and demonstrates how Stanwyck operated as a worker in the Hollywood film industry through the examination of her contracts with Warner Bros., Hal Wallis Productions, and Paramount Pictures. Because she was not under a long-term contract to one studio, Stanwyck had to rely on talent agents to manage her career. The business of talent agents in Hollywood until the 1950s is very under-researched and this chapter demonstrates not only the difficulties in investigating these agents, but also how this information can be used to understand the role and business of talent agents and agencies in this period. Material in the following chapters is fuelled by what is established in chapters one and two.

Chapter three picks up the chronological course of the thesis again and focuses on the war and post-war eras in the 1940s. Because this was a busy period for Stanwyck, publicity and promotional materials about her are abundant. However, I focus on three elements that were

foregrounded in Stanwyck's image at the time, based on their frequent appearance in publicity materials. During this decade many critics and reviewers commented on Stanwyck's versatility in roles and films and I therefore examine why Stanwyck was called versatile and how this benefitted her as a freelance star. Second, I discuss the various images of womanhood Stanwyck offered in her roles in popular (post-) war production trends. As I demonstrate, because of the war the popular images of women changed frequently and this raised questions of representations, which I address. Third, I investigate why Stanwyck was suddenly promoted as a glamorous film star after her marriage to Robert Taylor in 1939.

In the fourth chapter I argue that changes in the film industry as well as Stanwyck's ageing caused her film career (and that of many of her contemporaries) to decline in the 1950s. Roles for mature female stars became scarce because of industrial changes, changes in film content, and the emergence of a younger generation of female stars. I examine how Stanwyck's maturity was used in her films in this period. Although Stanwyck was visibly ageing, she was promoted as a role model for mature women. Various articles commented on her beauty as a mature woman and they offered female audiences beauty and dietary tips based on Stanwyck's lifestyle comments. This is contradictory to the general notion that feminine ideals are "youthful and thus vulnerable to deterioration with age" (Stacey, *Star Gazing* 226). However, Stanwyck's tips were not in line with the desired femininity at the time and I investigate how this was accommodated in her image. Stanwyck's performances in the "masculine" genre of the Western were also contradictory to the ideals of normative femininity. In the mid-1950s, the Western underwent narrative changes and opened up to include strong female roles. Stanwyck's persona as an independent woman suited her roles in these films.

As the roles for mature female stars in the film industry became scarce in the 1950s and 1960s, Stanwyck went to work in television. Chapter five examines Stanwyck's transition from film to television. I focus in particular on Stanwyck's anthology show *The Barbara Stanwyck Show* and her Western series *The Big Valley*. Stanwyck was one of the Hollywood stars who successfully changed from film to television in the early 1960s. Her television performances attempted to use her status as a Hollywood star to add glamour and prestige to television, and I will examine how Stanwyck's film image was translated and used for television.

Finally I offer a summary and consider the outcomes of my research in the concluding chapter. In this conclusion I will discuss how the historical approach influenced my research and its advantages and disadvantages for the study of stars. I also consider my findings about the construction of Stanwyck's image. Based on these findings I propose a theorization of the construction of a star image, which can be used as a base for further research in the field.

Chapter 1

The Construction of Stanwyck's Image, 1930-1939

In its review of Stanwyck's 1930 film Ladies of Leisure (d. Frank Capra, US) Photoplay remarked that the film was "a really fine picture because of the astonishing performance of a little tapdancing (sic) beauty who has in her the spirit of a great artist. Her name is Barbara Stanwyck" ("Shadow" 54). Whereas the Photoplay review wondered whether this was "the beginning of a great career," reviewer Al Sherman, in his review of Stanwyck's 1933 film Baby Face (d. Alfred E. Green, US), noted that "Miss Barbara Stanwyck, whose sullen beauty has stood her in good stead in many an uncertain film vehicle, again indulges in those emotional tantrums [. . .]. That Miss Stanwyck is convincing in these breast-heaving moments should prove [. . .] that this young actress has dramatic talent of true worth."¹ Her "excellent performance[s]" and "dramatic ability" made Stanwyck "one of the best" actresses of the early 1930s, and, according to film magazine Picturegoer, she even ranked above Norma Shearer and Joan Crawford as the "most popular actress in America" in 1935 ("Girl" 6).² These citations suggest that, in the early 1930s, Stanwyck's acting ability played an important part in her rise to fame and in her image.

Acting remained a central element in Stanwyck's image throughout her career, but it was not the only important aspect. As Richard Dyer argues, an image is made up of elements or signs that are foregrounded or displaced at certain times and which create a unique persona for the star. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the construction of Stanwyck's image by studios, critics, and fan magazines in the period 1930-1939. I examine in particular the period 1930-1934 when Stanwyck was under contract to two studios simultaneously: Columbia and Warner Bros. During this period both studios--each in its own way but with remarkable similarities--created Stanwyck's unique identity. I will argue that this is when the core elements of Stanwyck's image were established that can be considered the foundation on which Stanwyck's images were based. In other words, I investigate where the traits and meanings come from that can be read in her image. The elements I discuss return in nearly all the primary sources that I examined, confirming their importance to Stanwyck's persona. An understanding of the origins of Stanwyck's image can explain Stanwyck's fashionability during her career. The first two sections of this chapter function as a short introduction to the place of women in the (early) Depression era and Stanwyck's rise to stardom. The rest of the chapter examines the creation of Stanwyck's image and the models of womanhood she offered through her image. Subsequent chapters will build upon the basic themes and meanings in Stanwyck's image that I establish in this chapter.

Women in the US in the 1930s

The 1930s were dominated by the severest economic crisis the United States had ever faced: the Great Depression. Although at its peak employment affected between 12 and 15 million American workers, women's lives were much less influenced by the Depression than men's (Ware 14). Middle-class women's lives generally revolved around the house and the family. Domestic service declined in the 1930s, not just because families could no longer afford servants, but also because of the introduction of labour-saving household goods (Ware 4). However, with less money to spend, women often returned to the more laborious domestic tasks of canning and sewing. The Depression reinforced and strengthened the ideas of traditional division of roles in the household. The men were breadwinners; the women took care of the house and family (Bodnar 4). Women were therefore economically dependent on their husbands.

Since the "New Woman" of the 1920s, it was normal for young women to work between graduating from college and getting married (Rupp 54). There was, however, a sexual division of labour. Traditional women's work included domestic service, farm labour, and teaching. In the 1930s women also increasingly took on white-collar jobs such as secretary, typist, sales person, and journalist (Ware 24). This is addressed in the popular working-girl films which featured the heroines as secretaries and sales girls. In the mid- and late 1930s, the job of journalist became a popular profession for the female lead, for example Rosalind Russell in His Girl Friday (d. Howard Hawks, US, 1940), and Jean Arthur in Mr. Deeds Goes to Town (d. Frank Capra, US, 1936). Unlike single women, married women were not encouraged to work outside the home. If they were employed, they were often seen as "'pin-money workers,' women who worked in order to buy themselves unnecessary luxuries [. . .]" (Rupp 61). Stanwyck's film The Bride Walks Out (d. Leigh Jason, US, 1936) exemplifies this. Stanwyck plays Carolyn, a just-married model who struggles with domesticity and who cannot keep house on her husband Michael's (Gene Raymond) salary. She desperately wants to go back to modelling to earn more money, but Michael firmly believes married women should not work. When Carolyn gets a job, she keeps it secret from her husband. When Michael notices Carolyn's deceit, he walks out on her, only to be reunited again when their love proves stronger than their problems and Carolyn gives up her job. While women were allowed to work in films--even the gold digging heroines had jobs as chorus girls or models--most films told women that "their only acceptable roles lay in marriage, family, and deference to men" (Ware 180, 183). Therefore, female characters were often placed in supportive roles that ensured that the goals of Roosevelt's New Deal--traditional family values--were met (Bodnar 26). Female support, both on- and off-screen, was considered "key to male confidence" in these hard times (Bodnar 26).

Popular culture, and especially films, reinforced the traditional ideas that audiences might have lost during the Depression. According to Robert Sklar, “Hollywood divided its enormous powers of persuasion to preserving the basic moral, social and economic tenets of traditional American culture” (Movie-Made 175). During the 1930s, films provided cheap family entertainment and the average weekly film audience reached a record 85 million (Balio, Grand Design 2). John Bodnar argues that films made during this time were “devoted to the problem of the individual and the extent to which he (and especially she) could be free of economic distress and moral obligations [. . .]” (2). Audiences wanted to escape the hardships of the Depression; not just into a void, but into something they could relate to (Bergman xi-xvi). Films often attempted to reinforce traditional gender roles; advertising, radio, and even government posters did the same and advised women to dress nicely, please their husbands, and take care of the house and children (Gourley 13). This ideal was difficult to uphold, however, as the marriage and birth rates all dropped in the early 1930s. Many couples did not have the money to get married and weddings were postponed until the early 1940s, when the war boom and mobilization increased the number of marriages significantly (Ware 6; Hartman 164).

While women were expected to conform to the traditional ideal of woman, they were also encouraged to be glamorous. According to Life magazine, the “uncivilized” and “unabashed slut” of the 1920s was replaced in the 1930s by the “glamour girl” (Sargeant 66-67). This girl was to “resemble as closely as possible the archetypal model represented by the leading movie actresses and the girls who pose in fashion ads” (67). Films and fan magazines became trendsetters for women’s fashion. Fashion layouts became regular features in fan magazines, and department stores stocked copies of the fashions worn in films (Eckert 33-34). Similarly, stars endorsed cosmetics (particularly LUX soap and Max Factor make-up), which were often cheaper and thus more accessible to Depression-era women (figure 1). If women did not have the money to buy expensive fashions, they could at least look like glamour models through the use of make-up (Eckert 35). This emphasis on glamour was especially prevalent during the early (and hardest) years of the Depression, and it would occur again during World War II (see chapter three). Stanwyck, however, would not be associated with glamour.

"I can help you win hearts — and help them."

says **BARBARA STANWYCK**

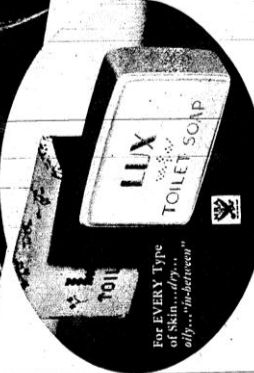


GIRLS, HERE'S A SECRET I LEARNED MY VERY FIRST YEAR IN THE CHORUS: THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE CHARM OF REALLY EXQUISITE SKIN MEN JUST CAN'T RESIST...

I HAVE THE SENSITIVE SKIN THAT GOES WITH RED HAIR, YET FOR YEARS MY SIMPLE BEAUTY CARE — LUX TOILET SOAP — HAS KEPT IT ALWAYS SOFT AND SMOOTH...

Precious Elements in this Soap— Scientists Explain

"Skin grows old-looking through the gradual loss of certain elements Nature puts in skin to keep it youthful," scientists say. "Gentle Lux Toilet Soap, so readily soluble, actually contains such precious elements— checks their loss from the skin."



This fascinating screen star tells you her secret of loveliness... how to have a skin that wins instant adoration.

You see her here as she looks in her own boudoir in Hollywood. Notice how amazingly soft and smooth her skin is. Surely you'll want to follow her advice—make yours as lovely!

All over the country girls are turning to the complexion care Barbara Stanwyck uses—proving that it really does bring a thrilling new beauty to the skin.

Actually 98 out of 10 screen stars use this same wonderful aid to loveliness—fragrant, white Lux Toilet Soap. Why don't you try this famous Hollywood complexion care? Get Lux Toilet Soap today... use it regularly. Notice how soft and smooth your skin looks... and feels... even from the first. Begin now to win new loveliness.



Men can't resist alluring skin!

DON'T BE SATISFIED WITH A SKIN THAT JUST "GETS BY" WITH A TEMPTING, TENDER-SMOOTH SKIN YOU CAN WIN HEARTS... AND HOLD THEM! JUST TRY MY BEAUTY SOAP — YOU'LL SEE!

LOVELY WARNER BROS. STAR

Figure 1a: Advertisement for LUX Toilet Soap in Photoplay (February 1934).

BARBARA STANWYCK in "STELLA DALLAS"
A SAMUEL GOLDWYN PRODUCTION

"How Beautiful She Looks"
they say of
BARBARA STANWYCK

POWDER... Creating a satin-smooth make-up that will cling for hours, Max Factor's Face Powder blends in color harmony with Barbara Stanwyck's titanic coloring. Perfect under any close-up test.

ROUGE... Harmonizing with the color tone of the powder... Max Factor's Rouge imparts a soft, lifelike glow of color to the cheeks... smooth, like finest skin texture, it always blends evenly.

LIPSTICK... Accenting the color appeal of the lips, Max Factor's Super-Indelible Lipstick completes the color harmony make-up. Moisture-proof... the color remains permanent and uniform for hours.

Wouldn't You Like to Have This Said About You?

WHAT A PLEASURE to know that the attraction of your beauty calls forth admiration. How interesting, how thrilling life becomes.

You can share this joy if you learn how to emphasize the charm of your own natural beauty with the magic of a new kind of make-up, originated for the stars of the screen by Max Factor, Hollywood's make-up genius.

It is called "color harmony make-up," and consists of face powder, rouge and lipstick in new, original, harmonized color tones. Created to beautifully living screen star types, you may be sure they will glorify the color appeal of your beauty, whether you are blonde, brunette, brownette or redhead.

Instantly, the very first time you make up, you will note an amazing difference. You will see how the face powder actually gives to your skin a satin-smooth loveliness... you will marvel how the rouge, like finest skin-texture, imparts a soft, natural color... you will see your lips become more alluring with a perfect color accent... and hours later you will wonder how make-up can remain so lastingly beautiful.

So today can bring your most wonderful adventure in beauty. Share the secret of all Hollywood's stars... for the luxury of Color Harmony Make-Up is now available to you at nominal prices. Max Factor's Face Powder, one dollar; Max Factor's Rouge, fifty cents; Max Factor's Super-Indelible Lipstick, one dollar.

Max Factor ★ Hollywood

For personal make-up advice... and to test your own color harmony shades in powder, rouge and lipstick... MAIL THIS COUPON.

Mail for POWDER, ROUGE AND LIPSTICK in YOUR COLOR HARMONY

MAX FACTOR, Max Factor's Make-Up Studio, Hollywood:
Send Free Size Box of Powder and Rouge Sample to my color harmony shade.
Also send me my Color Harmony Make-Up Chart and de page illustrated instruction book, "The New Art of Beauty Make-Up." FREE

NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY _____ STATE _____

DATE _____
QUEST. NO. _____

COMPLEXIONS	HAIR	EYES
Very Fair	Blond	Blue
Fair	Light Brown	Green
Fair to Dark	Dark Brown	Brown
Dark	Black	Dark Brown
Very Dark	Black	Dark Brown

Color Harmony Make-Up Chart and de page illustrated instruction book, "The New Art of Beauty Make-Up." FREE

Figure 1b: Advertisement for Max Factor in Photoplay (October 1937).

Stanwyck: From stage to screen

According to various discourses, Barbara Stanwyck was born Ruby Stevens in 1907 in Brooklyn, New York.³ She was orphaned at the age of four and after numerous chorus girl jobs she became a minor celebrity in the legitimate theatre, where she performed in two plays: The Noose (1926) and Burlesque (1927). During the production of the former, her name was changed to Barbara Stanwyck. While performing in Burlesque, Stanwyck played a bit part in the silent film Broadway Nights (d. Joseph C. Boyle, US, 1927). On 26 August 1928 Stanwyck became more famous when she married “Broadway’s Favorite Son,” vaudeville star Frank Fay. Although Hollywood was interested in Stanwyck, the couple only moved West in March 1929, when Fay was offered a film contract (“Barbara Stanwyck”; “NY-LA” 6).

Stanwyck and Fay moved to Hollywood at the time when sound films were a popular novelty. The rapid transition from silent to sound films brought specific acting problems with it. Studios needed actors who could act with their voice, rather than through miming. Many stage actors went to Hollywood to fill the places of silent actors whose voices were not suitable for recording. Kenneth MacGowan notes that during the silent era “almost anyone could be made reasonably effective as an actor [. . .],” but that “acting with the voice was another matter” (289). Sound films therefore required stage actors. Since both Stanwyck and Fay came from the stage and had experience in acting with their voices, they were signed to studios that were looking for new talent for sound films.

In February 1929, the New York Times reported that “[p]retty little Barbara Stanwyck, who walked right out of a night club into a spectacular stage success in ‘Burlesque’ has been signed by United Artists” (qtd. in Madsen 38). Stanwyck made The Locked Door (d. George Fitzmaurice, US, 1929) for United Artists, her first Hollywood film. It was the first film for which she received featured player credit and can therefore be considered Stanwyck’s first film. The Locked Door was followed by a film for Columbia, entitled Mexicali Rose (d. Erle C. Kenton, US, 1929). Stanwyck was under one-picture contracts to both studios which gave them the opportunity to decide whether she had star potential. Because both films were only programmers and neither studio had signed Stanwyck to a long-term contract, the publicity campaigns did not single out Stanwyck’s appearance in the films.

Unlike many Hollywood starlets, Stanwyck was not confined to playing a large number of bit parts before she performed in a starring role. Generally, when a new actress was signed to a major studio, she was often cast in various small parts so that the studio could decide what type she should be and in which genre or role the audience preferred her (Klaprat 355-372; McDonald, Star System 43). Stanwyck, however, became Columbia’s first female star after

only three films--Ladies of Leisure, Ten Cents a Dance (d. Lionel Barrymore, US, 1931), and The Miracle Woman (d. Frank Capra, US, 1931) (Balio, "Columbia" 429).

In an article in the Ladies of Leisure press book, Stanwyck attributed her quick rise to stardom to "just plain luck." The press book detailed Stanwyck's rise to stardom from the boarding houses in Brooklyn to her jobs as a chorus girl on Broadway, and from her performances in the legitimate theatre to Hollywood. This "road to stardom" story was an often-used strategy by studio publicity departments. It drew audience attention away from the fact that stars were manufactured by the star system, because star biographies frequently emphasized that stardom was achieved through luck, by being somewhere at the right time and place--such as Lana Turner's supposed discovery at the soda fountain of Schwab's drugstore ("Lana"). Nonetheless, the biographies also emphasized that the star already possessed the qualities he or she was famous for, but it took that bit of luck to be able to demonstrate these qualities and to rise to fame (Dyer, Stars 42).⁴ This "myth of success" implies that "American society [. . .] is open for anyone to get to the top, regardless of rank" (Dyer, Stars 42). It echoes the American Dream, the rags to riches story, and the idea that stars are just ordinary people--only with star quality and a lot more money.

Critics ascribed Stanwyck's overnight turn to stardom to her acting style. They noted that Stanwyck's acting style in Ladies of Leisure perfectly fitted her onscreen character ("Shadow" 54). In this film Stanwyck plays Kay, a "party girl" hired as a model by socialite painter Jerry Strong (Ralph Graves). Although Kay is initially only interested in Jerry's money, this changes when they fall in love. Jerry's parents object to the relationship, and his mother (Nance O'Neil) urges Kay to leave Jerry. In a desperate move, Kay jumps off a cruise ship but is rescued and wakes up with Jerry by her bedside. Kay's character fitted Stanwyck's off-screen image as an independent woman with lower-class associations. This "perfect fit" between onscreen and off-screen life occurs, according to Dyer, when aspects of a star's image conform to the traits of the character (Stars 129). I explain this in the following section where I analyze Stanwyck's acting, particularly in her collaborations with Capra during her Columbia contract (1930-1932). Her acting was first foregrounded through these collaborations. That Stanwyck's craftsmanship is foregrounded in her star image is noteworthy, since in the 1930s and 1940s the audience's attention was generally focused on the star's personality, rather than his or her craftsmanship. Only Bette Davis's image had a similar emphasis on acting (Baron 83). The analysis of Stanwyck's acting style in this chapter therefore provides the basis for the remainder of the thesis, as acting continued to be an important theme in Stanwyck's image. Although I focus in particular on the connection between Stanwyck and her films with Capra, what I describe in this section is applicable to Stanwyck's acting style throughout her career.

Stanwyck, Capra, and Acting

During the Depression Columbia studio turned out mostly B pictures and double-bill features--films that were fast and cheap to make. The studio used standard story formulas that lent themselves to economical film production, and it often re-made cheaper versions of previous A films (Balio, "Columbia" 421-422). Because Columbia did not have its own theatre chain but served independent theatres that changed bills regularly, it did not have to worry about falling attendances in this period and could concentrate on upgrading its films. Frank Capra joined the studio as a director in 1927 and was quickly assigned to direct the studio's occasional A film. In response to his success, Columbia created the "Capra unit" on its lot in 1932 (Schatz, "Anatomy" 21). Capra became Columbia's most important director. His film The Bitter Tea of General Yen (US, 1933), which stars Stanwyck, was chosen as the first feature to be shown at the lavish new Radio City Music Hall in New York (Balio, "Columbia" 426). After his success with It Happened One Night (US, 1934), Capra received top billing for his Columbia films, his name famously appeared above the title.⁵

According to Bernard Dick, Capra was the person who "gave Columbia stature" (9). As products of Columbia's top director, Capra's films were publicized as widely as a Columbia film-budget allowed. This is obvious when one compares the advertisements for Ladies of Leisure in Variety to advertisements from a major studio such as MGM (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer). MGM usually promoted multiple films in one advert, while Columbia publicized one film per advertisement. So while Joan Crawford, for example, was a major star at the time, she would be named as the star of a certain film in a list of four or five films, whereas Stanwyck would be featured in a one-page advertisement for a particular Capra film, which gave her and Capra better exposure (figure 2). MGM did not need to promote its stars individually as it was generally known that MGM had "more stars than there are in heaven" (Belton, American 71). A small studio such as Columbia, however, had to publicize its new players more directly. This way, both Capra and Stanwyck received ample publicity.

30 VARIETY Wednesday, June 11, 1930

DRAWING CARDS!

The crowds pay to see the big star names!

And in picture business, while other companies waver in policy, M-G-M remains

THE "DRAWING CARD" OUTFIT!

NOW and SOON!	WILLIAM HAYES	JOAN CRAWFORD
NORMA SHEARER	GRETA GARBO	Our Blushing Bride
LEONID KISSIN	LON CHANEY TALKS!	
MARION DAVIES	THE UNBORN TRINITY	
PRESSLER-MORAN	WILLIAM HAYES	
Caught Short	JOAN CRAWFORD	
GRETA GARBO	Our Blushing Bride	

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER

Your Luck is Star

35 VARIETY Wednesday, March 19, 1930

COLUMBIA has the SENSATION of the YEAR

LADIES of LEISURE

A Road Show Attraction

featuring the greatest cast of the year... headed by

Barbara Stanwyck
Lowell Sherman
Ralph Graves

Maria Prevost Nance O'Neil
George Fawcett Johnnie Walker
Juliette Compton

A FRANK CAPRA PRODUCTION
From a David Belasco Play by
Milton Herbert Gropper

Booked on sight for long runs by Orpheum San Francisco • Los Angeles and Woods Chicago

Figure 2: Advertisements in Variety for MGM (left, 11 June 1930) and Columbia (right, 19 March 1930).

Particularly during the Depression, Capra's films about the hopes and fears of the individual American attracted large audiences. Although he would later become renowned for films such as It Happened One Night, Mr. Deeds Goes to Town, and Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (US, 1939), which Sklar describes as films about "an idealized version of social relations," Capra's work of the early 1930s depicted inequalities and conflicts in human relations and the audience was shown "glimpses of the impossible or the forbidden without upsetting conventional values or beliefs [. . .]" (Sklar, Movie-Made 209, 206). Charles Maland describes the viewing-experience of audiences watching Capra's films of the early 1930s as having "gone through an intellectual-emotional-psychological experience that includes the depiction of very real cultural conflicts and the affirmation of an ideological perspective compelling to large numbers of Americans [. . .]" (85). Capra noted that, in this period, his stories "must have interesting characters who are human and do human things. [. . .] The cast must be the nearest approach in real life to the characters they are to portray" (Capra, "I Break" 15). Capra's films often incorporated matters of public interest so that audiences could relate to his films, such as the female evangelist resembling Aimee Semple McPherson in the Stanwyck-Capra vehicle The Miracle Woman.

In her films with Capra, Stanwyck portrayed women whose "hardened exterior serves as a protective covering for [their] basic tenderness" (McBride, Frank 163). According to Sklar, Stanwyck's performances in Capra's films were "central aspects of Capra's representation of 1920s-era American culture and society" ("Leap" 42). He also notes that Capra's heroines were "figures on the social margin" (43). The characters that Stanwyck portrayed in these films were often women from the wrong side of the tracks or girls being led into wrong by a man. They were independent women who wanted to change their social status, but were nearly always hampered by boundaries of class or by conventional morality.⁶ Capra's heroines also had warmth and optimism so Depression-era viewers could identify with them. The female protagonists were usually redeemed by a man who saw something in the woman that nobody had seen before. This "reformation of the heroine" was a recurring motif in the Stanwyck-Capra vehicles.

Natural and emotional acting

Stanwyck's acting style in these screen vehicles attracted the attention of critics and studios. In reviews of and publicity for her early films, Stanwyck was variously named a "natural actress," an "emotional actress," and a "dramatic actress."⁷ These terms were not explained, but were used rather loosely to describe certain returning characteristics of Stanwyck's acting style. An advertisement in Variety for the film Shopworn (d. Nicholas

Grinde, US, 1932), for example, promoted Stanwyck as: “Columbia ‘natural’ [who] is attracting big play-dates by the dozen [. . .]. Stanwyck’s emotional masterpiece!” (figure 3).

In his autobiography, Capra defined Stanwyck as a “natural” actress, a “primitive emotional” who “could grab your heart and tear it to pieces” (Name 115). This means that, as a natural actress, Stanwyck did not calculate or work out her performance, but seemingly “lives the part” or acts “by instinct” (E. Smith 20, 22). There is a lack of ostensible acting technique. This acting style most surely resulted from Stanwyck’s approach to a role as described in a recent biography by Al DiOrio. Speaking of her experiences with director Arthur Hopkins for her role in *Burlesque*, Stanwyck notes that: “Instead of giving me a direct reply [directions] he would tell me a story, get me to imagine I was in a situation similar to that in the play, suggest that if I was I would do so and so--and then I found myself unconsciously doing just what he wanted” (41). This method resembles the Stanislavski acting method, especially Stanwyck imaginatively projecting herself in the role and using the “creative if” (Stanislavski 467). Capra noted that Stanwyck’s “best work is the result not of timing and rehearsing and study--but of pure feminine reaction” (qtd. in E. Smith 20). Stanwyck’s characters thus reacted “naturally” in emotional situations in her films; natural being a representation of objective reality, or the way the audience expected real-life people to behave in a similar situation.

Many reviews therefore called Stanwyck’s performances “sincere” and “real.”⁸ These terms were also applied to her off-screen life, which makes it important to note here. Articles in (fan) magazines described Stanwyck as an “honest person” who had “escaped going Hollywood,” and who was “most forthright and outspoken” and had “made a cult of sincerity.”⁹ Her natural acting style fuelled the idea that Stanwyck was “authentic” as a star. According to Dyer, an important component of Hollywood stars is that they often embody the “rhetoric of authenticity,” which means that “[s]tars must be what they seem to be, his/her performance is seen as an expression of his/her true self” (Stars 21). Authenticity is generated by the ordinary/extraordinary dialectic in a star image. The star’s ordinariness (being one of us, being “real”) comes through his or her image, indicating his or her authenticity.¹⁰ The combination of Stanwyck’s natural acting method, the articles about her off-screen naturalness (i.e. down-to-earth, sincere), and her lack of glamour--glamour is usually associated with Hollywood--contributed to the idea that Stanwyck was ordinary and natural, that she was off-screen what she seemed to be onscreen.



PUBLIX GRABS COLUMBIA HIT for **N. Y. PARAMOUNT** B'KLYN PARAMOUNT!

barbara
STANWYCK in
SHOPWORN

Smash Twin Opening in giant Publix theatres set for April first! A top-notch picture in top-notch houses! Columbia "natural" is attracting big play-dates by the dozen from every direction!

STANWYCK'S EMOTIONAL MASTERPIECE!
Giving everything she's got in a performance that reaches genius. Great story and cast. It's your picture—it's **EVERYBODY'S PICTURE!**

with **REGIS TOOMEY—ZASU PITTS**
Lucien Littlefield—Robert Alden

Story by Sarah Y. Mason
Dialogue by Jo Swerling and Robert Riskin
Directed by NICHOLAS GRINDE

Columbia THE LINK BETWEEN SHOWMEN AND PROFITS!

PLAY-DATES?
Here are just a few high spots on the march across the map!

- BUFFALO, N. Y. Lothe
- DALE, MASS. RKO
- SYRACUSE, N. Y. RKO
- FT. WAYNE, IND. RKO
- CHAMPAIGN, ILL. RKO
- TACOMA, WASH. RKO
- CLEVELAND, O. RKO
- FT. WORTH, TEX. RKO
- DALLAS, TEX. RKO
- MEMPHIS, TENN. RKO
- ROCHESTER, N. Y. RKO
- YOUNGSTOWN, O. RKO
- PROVIDENCE, R.I. RKO
- AKRON, O. RKO
- CINCINNATI, O. RKO

Pictures in these houses have got to pay! Take a tip from the big bookers. Book "SHOPWORN"!

Figure 3a: Advertisement for Shopworn in Variety (22 March 1930), emphasizing Stanwyck's acting ability.



Figure 3b: Advertisement from the press book for Columbia's The Miracle Woman, emphasizing Stanwyck's acting ability.

This naturalness was also derived from Stanwyck's lack of class affectation: publicity biographies and articles from this period regularly referred to Stanwyck's lower-class background. Her official biographies (compiled by her PR agent Helen Ferguson) mention that Stanwyck was orphaned at the age of four and that she "is straightforward" and "sincere."¹¹ Fan magazines, however, drew attention to Stanwyck's "awful" childhood. For example, one article noted that "Brooklyn's little Ruby Stevens [. . .] had to claw her way to success, taking punishment all the way," while another reported that Stanwyck was "born in the gutter and brought up in circumstances of hardship" (Breen 13).¹² Similarly, Stanwyck's mode of behaviour and speech depicted her lower-class associations (particularly in the early 1930s, much less thereafter). Articles described her as "hot-tempered," and she told a reporter: "Don't tell me that I should control my temper. I know I should. But sometimes I can't" (M. Kerr 43). In an interview in 1933, Stanwyck recalled that "a woman interviewer asked one day why Fay wouldn't let me use [make-up]. [. . .] I just socked her in the nose. Another dame wanted to know if [. . .] Fay wouldn't let me wear high heels. I socked her too" (Grant 60). Stanwyck replied to the question whether she had threatened to "black the eye of a famous columnist": "I did and the threat still holds good" (Fiddler and Stanwyck 22). These are obviously not the answers expected from a lady or a glamorous film star. Stanwyck was thus promoted as lower-class (natural) rather than glamorous (manufactured).

There was a high degree of correspondence between Stanwyck's onscreen and off-screen images. Many of her characters were lower-class, most notably in their appearance. Stanwyck was often applauded for either foregoing make-up (in The Plough and the Stars [d. John Ford, US, 1937]), or by looking haggard (in Stella Dallas) (AFI 35; Tims 48). A reader's letter in Photoplay of January 1932 showed appreciation for Stanwyck as a non-glamour star: "Barbara Stanwyck is not so beautiful and glamorous and waxlike. Natural is better" (sic) (Krazok 10). Glamour had not been a part of Stanwyck's life before she became a film star and it did not fit with the image that Stanwyck was "natural" and from a lower-class background. She could therefore frequently be unglamorous onscreen without it damaging her image, precisely because she was perceived as an alternative to glamour the upper-class actresses (e.g. Norma Shearer and Ruth Chatterton).

Consequently, there is a particular "fit" between the characters Stanwyck played in Capra's films, her acting method ("what would I do in such a situation?"), and her lower-class background. Vsevolod Pudovkin argued that "the relationship between the proposed image [the character] and the actor as a live person is particularly strong at the beginning of his [sic] work" (240). This is certainly true for Stanwyck, as I demonstrated, which seems to have been part of her appeal as a star. Occasionally, there is still a correspondence between her character and her

off-screen life in her later career: her roles as a burlesque dancer in Ball of Fire (d. Howard Hawks, US, 1942) and Lady of Burlesque (d. William A. Wellman, US, 1943) recall Stanwyck's early career as a hooper on Broadway. However, particularly in Stanwyck's films with Capra, the image of Stanwyck's off-screen life corresponds with her roles. Stanwyck could draw from her own experiences of independence and hardship to portray her characters, which were usually tough, hard-boiled dames with a soft core who sought romantic fulfilment. For example, in Shopworn Stanwyck plays Kitty Lane, a poor waitress who falls in love with a wealthy young man but has to fight his family to find happiness. In The Purchase Price (d. William A. Wellman, US, 1932) she plays Joan Gordon, a nightclub singer who leaves her romance with a gangster to become a mail-order bride to a small-town farmer. In Ladies They Talk About (d. William Keighley and Howard Bretherton, US, 1933) Stanwyck plays Nan, a lady bank robber who is sent to prison after her confessions to a priest and tries to revenge him when she gets out, but falls in love with him instead.

These roles were an outlet for what critics called Stanwyck's "emotional acting" ability ("Ladies of Leisure" 35). Underneath a one-page portrait in Photoplay of September 1930, the by-line reads: "Probably the most highly praised young actress of the last few months--Barbara Stanwyck, who shot to *emotional stardom* on the strength of her unforgettably beautiful and moving performance in 'Ladies of Leisure.' This office is bombarded with letters praising her beauty and acting power" (emphasis added) (qtd. in Griffith 19). Other articles mentioned that Stanwyck "does not rely on make-up to convey the illusion of age [in So Big]. Her every movement and gesture does that to perfection" (Collier 20). And while reviews for Ladies of Leisure were mixed, Variety noted that Stanwyck saved the picture with "her ability to convince in heavy emotional scenes" (M. Hall; "Ladies of Leisure" 35). In 1933, a Variety reviewer noted that all Stanwyck's films were expected to have a moment in which Stanwyck could "blow up in a shattering emotional scene" (Ager 43). Indeed, many of her films often have only one scene that includes an emotional outburst by Stanwyck. The plots build up to this scene, about one reel from the ending. At this point in the narrative, Stanwyck's character is usually driven into a corner and has to defend herself for her previous actions; either to a man or to her lover's family. Examples include Kay's outburst against Jerry's mother who asks Kay to give up Jerry in Ladies of Leisure, Joan's fury when her husband (George Brent) accuses her of infidelity in The Purchase Price, and Mary's (Stanwyck) and her German husband Hugo's (Otto Kruger) realization that their friends and neighbours avoid them in a storm of anti-German hatred at the outbreak of the First World War in Ever in My Heart (d. Archie Mayo, US, 1933).

Another indication of the persistent association between Stanwyck and a certain form of emotional display is the fact that fifteen years after she left Columbia, Harry Cohn, president of

the studio, asked for a “Stanwyck scene” to be included in Max Ophuls’s The Reckless Moment (US, 1949) (Bacher 308-309). In his book Max Ophuls in the Hollywood Studios, which includes this reference, Lutz Bacher describes a “Stanwyck scene” as a “strong” scene, a “more overtly emotional scene” (308). This suggests that, for Cohn, Stanwyck was a byword for a mode of emotional showcasing.

Stanwyck’s “emotional” acting is part of her style of underplaying emotions. This is obvious when one compares Stanwyck’s style to, say, Bette Davis’s histrionics. Davis often used her whole body to convey an intense emotion. She used arms and torso, constantly moving these in a gesticulatory way.¹³ Possibly because Davis was trained as a dancer, she was able to use her body in such an expressive way to convey her emotions (Sikov 26-27, 29). Martin Shingler argues that Davis concentrated her performance “specifically on the movements and tensions of her shoulders, torso, hips and arms” (49). It is difficult (sometimes even impossible, because of Davis’s fast movements) to read emotions from her face alone. If her emotions can be read, they are usually extremely obvious, i.e. they are conveyed in a mannered or prototypical way. Stanwyck’s emotions show in her face and in the absence of gesticulatory movements. She primarily uses her face, voice, shoulders and arms. Moreover, she uses her shoulders and arms only if she physically has to defend herself, almost never, like Davis, as a “culturally transmitted gesture” or a pantomime style pose (Naremore, Acting 63). A fan magazine article from 1936 states that Stanwyck’s acting “fascinates because of sincerity and complete absence of studied effects.”¹⁴ Although the concept of “studied effects” is not explained, it seems to refer to the gesticulatory movements or prototypical facial expressions that were often used in theatre and in silent film (Mayer 11). In an article for the Los Angeles Times in 1987, Stanwyck explained that she primarily used her eyes in screen acting, rather than mannerisms she used in the theatre: “Mr. Capra taught me that. I mean, sure, it’s nice to say very nice dialogue, if you can get it. But great moving acting [. . .]. Watch the eyes” (Rosenfield 4).

There are numerous examples when Stanwyck underplays emotions in her films. An early case is the night scene in Ladies of Leisure. When Kay is modelling for Jerry, he offers her his couch to stay overnight when they work late one night. She reluctantly accepts his offer. Kay’s couch is in front of a large window through which moonlight shines on her makeshift bed. This backlight from the outside terrace sets the scene as very electric and frames Stanwyck’s face in the following scenes. The sequence starts with a medium close-up of Kay, awake in her bed. The camera cuts to a close-up of the doorknob of Jerry’s bedroom door, which slowly turns. As Jerry walks towards Kay’s couch, only his feet are visible through Capra’s use of a camera at ground height, increasing the tension.



Figure 4a: Detail from Columbia's Ladies of Leisure that shows Stanwyck's/Kay's fearful face.



Figure 4b: Detail from Ladies of Leisure where Stanwyck's/Kay's face expresses both happiness and relief.



Figure 4c: Detail from Ladies of Leisure that shows Stanwyck/Kay chewing on her blanket.

There is a cut to Kay in her bed; her face registers fear (obvious through her wide eyes) and she feigns sleep (figure 4a). Jerry walks into the shot, and his hands cover Kay with another blanket. He turns and walks away while Kay opens her eyes. Her face expresses a mix of happiness and relief; happiness because Jerry seems to care for her by bringing her another blanket, and relief because he did not make sexual advances (figure 4b). Kay puts the blanket to her mouth and starts chewing on it in a childlike absorption while her face registers both emotions until the scene fades out (figure 4c).¹⁵ Because Kay is only lit from the shoulders up, Stanwyck is forced to use only her face to convey the required emotions.

Such close-ups exploit the actress's minimal facial expressions which indicated the "naturalness" mentioned by critics. This is exemplified in the breakfast scene from the same film. It follows the night scene described earlier and shows Kay's attempts to attract Jerry's attention from across the breakfast table. Jerry is hiding behind a newspaper and Kay's face changes from a large, loving smile (figure 5a), to a trembling smile (figure 5b), to a flood of tears (figure 5c) in her attempt to get Jerry to notice her.

Stanwyck's acting style continued to play a major part in her popularity, as is suggested by later reviews of her films, which nearly always refer to her acting.¹⁶ Comments such as "[we] know what to expect by now [from Stanwyck's performances]" require sufficient knowledge about Stanwyck's acting to understand what these comments refer to, which I have demonstrated here.¹⁷ Despite the importance of acting, connotations of natural and lower-class in Stanwyck's image, these were not the only themes that were established and foregrounded in this period, as the following section shows.



Figure 5a: Detail from Ladies of Leisure showing Stanwyck's minimal facial expressions that change from smiling...



Figure 5b: ...to trembling...



Figure 5c: ...to crying.

Onscreen Immorality and Off-Screen Morality

In December 1931 *Variety*'s front page read "Sinful Girls Lead in 1931" (5). According to the trade paper, public taste had changed from "heroines on pedestals" to "glamorous, shameful ladies" and this was to be blamed on women's taste in films ("Sinful Girls" 5; "Dirt Craze" 1). The women's pictures of the early 1930s offered their female audience illicit romance and passion, but at a safe distance. They showed the sleek lifestyles that Depression-era women did not have but dreamed about. According to Jeanine Basinger and Jackie Stacey, women could regard these "over-the-top, out-of-control plots" precisely because they were not real (Basinger 6, 7; *Star Gazing* 145-151). Ruth Morris, *Variety*'s expert on women's interests, commented that "[t]he smug and contented housewife subconsciously envies the glamour that surrounds cinema mistresses. Luxury, excitement, dangerously stolen romance are an alluring opposition to her own conventional life" (sic) (qtd. in Doherty, *Pre-Code* 127). The Depression had caused a drop in both admission prices and audience numbers. Studios relied on sexual insinuations and violence--often embodied by the "sinful girls" and gangsters--in their films to lure audiences back to the cinema (Doherty, *Pre-Code* 104). In 1934 the Motion Picture Production Code was enforced by the Production Code Administration (PCA), which forbade excessive violence, illegal drugs, adultery, and more controversial topics. This meant that studios could no longer openly use sexual insinuations and violence in their films, and had to use figurative ways to depict what they used to be able to show.¹⁸

Between 1930 and 1934, Warner Bros. was particularly notorious for its use of "glamorous, shameful ladies" in its cycle of "fallen woman" films (Balio, *Grand* 247-248). These films featured "flappers, gold diggers, chorines, [and] wise-cracking shopgirls" who used men and transgressed sexual norms in order to gain status and rise in class--in particular to leave the domestic space (Jacobs 11). Thomas Doherty argues that many of these fallen women were "apologetic," meaning that they had to transgress sexual norms because they were victims of economic or romantic circumstances (e.g. *The Sin of Madelon Claudet* [d. Edgar Selwyn, US, 1931] and *Forbidden* [d. Frank Capra, US, 1932]) (*Pre-Code* 131). Most of Warner Bros.' fallen women were not so apologetic. These women were calculating bad girls and gold diggers who treated sex as a business transaction to get what they wanted (Doherty, *Pre-Code* 131; Jacobs 11). Lea Jacobs argues that the fallen woman films "downplay the heroine's degradation and decline in favor of upward mobility" (13). These bad girls were often associated with modernity and glamour because films showed them, after their goal was completed, in luxurious apartments with lavish gowns. The art-deco penthouses contrasted with the traditional "small town kitchen" or domestic ideal where the "good woman" was positioned (Jacobs 56). Jacobs argues that the glamour in these films had a specific narrative function as a metaphor for the

“New Woman” who possessed independence, sexual promiscuity, and feminine self-indulgence (53, 57). Similarly, reviewer Al Sherman of the Morning Telegraph noted in his review for Baby Face that, “[t]he way of feminine transgression is burdened with Park Avenue apartments, beautiful gowns, luxurious automobiles and the lavish attentions of willing and generous males.”¹⁹

Although Stanwyck would be associated with these popular, glamorous, bad girls, she did not actually play many “shameful ladies” during her contract to Warner Bros. (1931-1934). On 13 May 1931 Variety noted that Warner Bros. had removed Stanwyck from a scheduled vice film because she played “the loose lady too often” (“Too Loose” 3). This contradicts the promotional materials for Stanwyck’s Warner Bros. films. An advertisement for Illicit (d. Archie Mayo, US, 1931) publicized the “true-to-life story of one girl’s amazing adventures in the dangerous business of *experimenting* with love.” Stanwyck’s character Ann in Illicit is a “shameful lady”: she is a liberated, young woman who lives with her wealthy lover Dick (James Rennie) without being married. She refuses to do so because she is afraid it will destroy their love. An advertisement for the “dangerous” production Ladies They Talk About promoted Stanwyck’s role as “[t]he Stanwyck tradition of *daring* roles [. . .]” (press book). However, films that did not show Stanwyck as a calculating gold digger often promoted her as such to attract audiences. For example, an advertisement for The Purchase Price suggested that the film was similar to Stanwyck’s “daring” roles in her previous features Night Nurse (d. William A. Wellman, US, 1931) and Illicit, adding: “Wait until you see Barbara Stanwyck *flame* through this torrid romance [. . .]. Beautiful! ... Seductive! ... She has everything--and uses it! ... Lives violently--and loves passionately!” Stanwyck’s role as a night-club-singer-turned-mail-order-bride-for-a-poor-farmer does not fit the image of a calculating gold digger (figure 6).

Warner Bros. also issued a series of “cheesecake” photographs to accompany Stanwyck’s roles in her “dangerous” films (figure 7).²⁰ In this respect, Peter Stanfield argues that many of Stanwyck’s films include particular songs on their soundtracks that signify Stanwyck’s character’s transgressive female sexuality and her place at the margins of society. Stanfield notes in particular St. Louis Blues, Frankie and Johnny, and Blues in the Night: songs that deal with women in sexual situations. The inclusion of these songs signifies what the Production Code Administration would not let the filmmakers show visibly on screen (37-38, 112).²¹

PHOTOPLAY MAGAZINE FOR SEPTEMBER, 1932

A TORCH SINGER'S THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS



BARBARA Stanwyck

"The Purchase Price"

If she thrilled you in "Night Nurse" and "Illicit", wait until you see Barbara Stanwyck *flame* through this torrid romance of a night club torch singer. Beautiful... Seductive!... he has everything—and uses it!... Lives violently—and loves passionately! See the most vibrant star on the screen in the scorching story ten million fans demanded for her... Hear her sing for the first time!... It's a double thrill you won't forget!

with GEORGE BRENT

The complete cast of "The Purchase Price" with "The Big" LYLE TAYLOR—HAROLD ABRAMSON—BARBARA STANWYCK—GEORGE BRENT—Directed by WILLIAM WELLMAN



The Racketeer



The Park Avenue Play Boy



The "Unknown" from the West

They fought for her LOVE!

PHOTOPLAY MAGAZINE FOR FEBRUARY, 1931

MARRIED LOVE



ILLICIT

Which—

DOES THE MODERN GIRL PREFER?

SAFETY in marriage or daring adventures in stolen love? What is the real truth about this modern generation's attitude toward the once sacred convention of marriage? "ILLICIT" tells, frankly and fearlessly, the true-to-life story of one girl's amazing adventures in the dangerous business of experimenting with love.

Based on the play by Edith Fitzgerald and Robert R. R. R. R.

featuring BARBARA STANWYCK
CHARLES BUTTERWORTH · JAMES RENNIE · RICARDO CORTEZ · JOAN BLONDELL · NATALIE NOOREHEAD · CLAUDE GILLINGWATER

DIRECTED BY ARCHIE MAYO

AWARNER BROS. AND VITAPHONE PRODUCTION

"Vitaphone" is the registered trademark of The Vitaphone Corporation

Figure 6: Advertisements in Photoplay for The Purchase Price (September 1932), promoting Stanwyck as a bad girl or gold digger.



Figure 7: Cheesecake photos of Stanwyck for the promotion of Warner Bros.'s Illicit (photos by Mack Elliott).

A domestic goddess?

While Stanwyck often portrayed immoral characters onscreen, her off-screen family life as spouse to Fay was depicted very differently and Stanwyck's marital happiness was a focal point for the press. According to Hollywood standards, happiness for a woman meant domestic happiness and unhappiness meant domestic failure. Most fan magazines featured articles about the stars' marital happiness, and female stars stated that when the right man would come along, they would give up their careers for domesticity.²² According to Screen Guide, marital success in Hollywood meant "career sacrifice, particularly on the part of the wife" (Pierce 54). However, "[t]here are many actresses who refuse to give up their careers. What about these women? you ask. Are they doomed to spinsterhood or unhappiness?" (55). It is important to note that the women were stars and they would not be stars without their careers. It thus meant that to be married and a "proper" woman meant giving up stardom. According to Adrienne McLean "[m]arriage is what makes American adults *normal* [. . .], but it is also what makes them the less interesting *norm* [. . .]" (77). This refers to Dyer's ordinary/extraordinary dialectic: everyone can be married (ordinary), but not everyone is a star (extraordinary).

Stanwyck's family life became particularly interesting for fan magazines in 1931, when her onetime popular husband was no longer popular in Hollywood. Moreover, Fay was described as "Barbara Stanwyck's husband" instead of Stanwyck being "that girl Frank Fay married" (Albert 69). Fan magazines frequently featured articles that speculated whether Stanwyck would give up her career for her husband. These articles mentioned the dilemma many women have: work or home? In the early 1930s, Stanwyck threatened to choose home: "If I'm not [. . .] going to have the satisfaction of making good pictures, I may as well quit" (Fletcher 104). When her husband's career declined and rumours of a pending divorce were spread, Stanwyck's threats changed in protection of her husband: "I'm sick and tired of this divorce rumor stuff. [. . .] If the studio doesn't protect me from this sort of gossip, I'm going to quit pictures!" (Calhoun 31). She stated: "If I can't stay married and stay in pictures, I'll get out of pictures. One more crack about Fay, and I will anyhow" (Grant 26). Modern Screen even noted that Stanwyck "waits on Fay, sees that his socks are darned [. . .] [and] that his tie is the right one for the suit he is wearing [. . .]," while True Confessions stated that "if Fay should abandon Hollywood tomorrow, there is no doubt that Stanwyck would follow him" (Fletcher 104; "Cinderella Career" 57). Stanwyck's overwhelming love for Fay was publicized in various ways. Modern Screen remarked that "[t]he faith which Barbara Stanwyck has in Frank Fay's new venture [a vaudeville tour] is an example to the whole world [. . .]. [It is] a story that is 10x more romantic, 10x more unbelievable and 10x more beautiful than any motion picture [. . .]" (Jamison 18). Photoplay mentioned that Stanwyck was "an old-fashioned one-man woman,

[who] would sacrifice a brilliant career for Fay,” and Movie Classic quoted Stanwyck saying that “[b]eing a wife is more important to me than being a film star” (York 55; Grant 60). Similarly, True Confessions stated that Stanwyck “would just as soon remain at home and be known as Mrs. Frank Fay,” and Photoplay printed her remark: “I am Mrs. Frank Fay first and Barbara Stanwyck second” (“Cinderella Career” 57; Albert 69).

A reader’s letter in Photoplay implies that Stanwyck’s love for her husband and her dedication to her family life could also be an obsession: “[Stanwyck] has to quit talking so much about Fay. Why doesn’t she emulate the example of [. . .] Gloria Swanson who, although married several times, still seeks romance [. . .]?” (M. Drake 10). Nevertheless, Stanwyck painted a picture of a blissful household, exactly as studio publicity departments liked to see: a star living in a lovely house with a lovely family, which conformed to the domestic ideal at this time. Several photos of Stanwyck and Fay were supposed to demonstrate that the Fays were indeed a “happy couple” (figure 8).

Stanwyck’s off-screen image as a devoted wife who conformed to social expectations thus contrasted significantly with many of her onscreen characters who defied marriage and social norms. Because Stanwyck was promoted as an immoral woman in her Warner Bros. films, studio publicity had to make sure that audiences did not confuse the onscreen character with Stanwyck as a star. Stanwyck’s marriage and domestic happiness were therefore exploited to promote her as the opposite of the immoral women she played on screen.

Stanwyck’s repertoire of characters was not limited to Warner Bros.’ bad girls and Capra’s “reformation of the heroine” characters. In 1932, the maternal drama was a popular cycle. In January of that year, Variety reported that Hollywood’s new style was a “baby craze, both on- and off-screen.” The paper noted that, “[n]ot long ago stars acted out stories to prove that girls should have a career” (“Baby Craze” 1). However, Norma Shearer proved that stars could have babies and a career, and that stars “who thought they had to be the same kind of creatures off the screen as on [...] would [not] break faith with their fans” when they became mothers (“Baby Craze” 1). Variety noted that “the public is sticking to the current cycle of motherhood films,” which “protect their stars by glorifying and justifying motherhood” (“Baby Craze” 1). In that same year, Stanwyck performed in the film So Big (d. William A. Wellman, US, 1932), a maternal drama based on the novel by Edna Ferber (who also wrote Show Boat and Stage Door). Performing in a literary adaptation of a Pulitzer-Prize novel gave Stanwyck’s image a status boost. In the film, Stanwyck plays a farmer’s widow who works her farm so that her son can have an education. So Big provided Stanwyck with an opportunity to play a



Figure 8: Promotional materials showing Stanwyck and Fay as a happily married couple (right, Photoplay October 1931).

sacrificial mother rather than a bad girl or a fallen woman, as well as the challenge of ageing on screen. The popularity of the maternal drama in the early 1930s meant that a maternal character could boost a female star's image. Off-screen motherhood also enhanced stars' popularity.²³ Six months after *So Big* was released, Stanwyck and her husband adopted a baby boy, Dion Anthony Fay ("News" 50). Children meant a good, wholesome image and posing with Dion for publicity boosted Stanwyck's image as a "proper" woman, i.e. a wife and mother.

A New Beginning

Nevertheless, Stanwyck divorced Fay in 1935, just after her contract to Warner Bros. ended.²⁴ The "happy family" image was gone, and the divorce had to be incorporated in Stanwyck's image--it could not be ignored since a divorce between two famous people attracts public attention. However, the fact that Stanwyck started a new path in her career as a freelancer was combined with the new path she was taking in life: as an independent, single, working mother. Emily Carman rightly argues that fan magazines "underscored an *independent stardom* in their discussions of the [life] of Stanwyck [. . .]" (587). Independent stardom refers to Stanwyck's persona "as an independent, working 'modern' woman [. . .]" (587). Carman goes on to note that the "unconventional" lifestyles of female stars created "an image of feminine individuality rather than domesticity" (587). A *Photoplay* article explained that after the divorce and the studio contract there was a "brand new Stanwyck with a brand new personality," who was now "more peaceful, and more herself" (Stevens 24). This can be read as a critique of the previous so-called happy marriage, that this was no longer a reference to something authentic, but to a fraudulent representation of truth. An article in *Movie Mirror* recalled that "Fay decided he didn't want her to work [. . .]. They would have a home, Barbara would be the little woman, Fay would bring home the bacon." Stanwyck replied that she "tried to pretend [. . .] into believing that [she] liked it" (Hall, "True Life" 64). The marriage had been a façade, something that hid the "true" Stanwyck. Fan magazine writers replaced Stanwyck's happy, marital bliss with a life of freedom, hard work, and single-motherhood. During her marriage, Stanwyck had been "unhappy, [. . .] resentful and confused" (Stevens 24). After the divorce, she was "brand new" and "ready to work" (24). Stanwyck repeatedly noted that she was "so thrilled with [her] career" and that "[f]reedom is so precious! It is such an amazing experience to do what you want to do again" (Ramsey, "Barbara Stanwyck" 103; Ramsey, "Some" 28).

Nevertheless, the focus on Stanwyck's divorce and independence rather than on her family life means that, in the late 1930s, Stanwyck's off-screen life could be indirectly labelled undomestic and even unfeminine since the popular image of woman was that of a homemaker. *Movie Mirror*'s writer Gladys Hall noted that Stanwyck "is a careerwoman and [neither] the fulfilment of love nor the serenity of domesticity will ever change that" (sic) ("Mr. Taylor" 28).



Figure 9: Promotional materials (photographers unknown, author's collection) showing Stanwyck's maternal image in the period after her divorce.

Minor notices in interviews and biographies also hinted at Stanwyck's inability to submit to domesticity. A 1933 Warner Bros. biography notes that, in her house, Stanwyck "is more interested in artistic arrangements than in culinary and housewifely duties" and that she "has absolutely no interest in cooking."²⁵ Stanwyck acknowledged that she had a "reputation for not being very lady-like" because of her language, independence, and comments about socking interviewers (Grant 60). Her undomestic and unfeminine associations were counterbalanced by articles that defined her as very feminine: her love and dedication for her husband and son, and her "typically feminine" traits. For example, Movie Mirror featured an article entitled "Barbara Stanwyck: Woman's Woman" where Stanwyck was described as a "real woman"; she supposedly swapped recipes with Joan Crawford, had a "non-star" friendship with her hairdresser, and did everything for her son (Proctor 92-93). Similarly, certain promotional materials about Stanwyck from this period concentrated on her maternal and domestic sides: life at her new ranch with her son Dion. That Stanwyck and Dion were no longer a traditional family seemed to be subordinate to the love she displayed for her child (figure 9). These articles detailing Stanwyck's femininity balanced her independence (in both home/marriage and work) with traditional models of femininity (being a homemaker).

The Stanwyck-Taylor romance

Stanwyck's image as a single, independent mother was soon replaced by the focus on her relationship with film star Robert Taylor. The romance became the most prominent feature in her image when her career entered a slump in the second half of the 1930s. Although Stanwyck said she liked the "romance of living my own life," that she was "not going to marry at all," and that her "freedom has become too dear," she started to go out with Taylor in 1936.²⁶ Taylor was arguably MGM's most handsome leading man. He rose to stardom in Magnificent Obsession (d. John M. Stahl, US, 1936), where he played a sophisticated playboy, and in Camille (d. George Cukor, US, 1936), where he played the handsome lover to Greta Garbo's Marguerite. After these films, Taylor was generally said to be the "greatest movie romantic idol since Valentino [. . .]."²⁷ His "pretty boy" image fitted his bachelor status, making him even more attractive to female audiences. When Taylor and Stanwyck started dating, Taylor's screen roles changed. He no longer only played handsome lovers, but also tough guys in roles that required more athletic ability, for example in The Crowd Roars (d. Richard Thorpe, US, 1938) and Stand Up and Fight (d. W.S. Van Dyke, US, 1939). Whether MGM decided that Taylor needed to be more ruggedly masculine now that he was in a relationship, or whether there was another reason, I do not know. Taylor's masculinity was also commented upon by fan magazines whereas they once compared his handsomeness to that of an Irish setter--"[b]oth are sleek and strong with sentimental eyes"--they now proclaimed: "Today Taylor is a man."²⁸



Figure 10: Stanwyck and Taylor at various Hollywood hotspots during their romance (photographers unknown, 1936-1937, author's collection).

MGM exploited audience interest in the Stanwyck-Taylor romance and starred the couple in a film: His Brother's Wife (d. W.S. Van Dyke, US, 1936). Twentieth Century-Fox did the same in This is My Affair (d. William A. Seiter, US, 1937). Photos of “Hollywood’s favorite romancers” dancing at the Trocadero and other Los Angeles hotspots filled magazines and newspapers (figure 10).²⁹

By late 1938, various articles about the couple wondered why they had not tied the knot yet.³⁰ Kirtley Baskette’s article in Photoplay in January 1939 apparently fast-tracked the relationship into marriage, according to recent sources.³¹ The article was entitled “Hollywood’s Unmarried Husbands and Wives” and showed film stars that were dating and practically living together without being married. Besides Stanwyck and Taylor, the article also mentioned Clark Gable and Carole Lombard, Charlie Chaplin and Paulette Goddard, and Constance Bennett and Gilbert Roland. After her divorce from Fay, Stanwyck moved to a ranch in the San Fernando Valley next door to her friend and agent Zeppo Marx. Here, Stanwyck and Zeppo’s wife Marion established Marwyck, a ranch to breed and raise race horses (E. Wilson 69; Rankin 39). Taylor built a ranch on an adjoining plot and while the couple did not officially live together, they lived close enough for rumours to start about their relationship. Baskette’s article described Stanwyck and Taylor’s ranch life, their permanent seats together at the Hollywood Legion Stadium, and their evenings together as an “almost perfect domestic picture. But no wedding rings in sight!” (222). Modern sources state that MGM immediately took care of its two big male stars in this small scandal. Gable is said to have divorced his wife as soon as possible under the pressure of MGM so that he could marry Lombard (Madsen 168). Taylor had never been married and Stanwyck was divorced, so nothing stood in the way of a marriage. They were married on 14 May 1939. Recent biographies of both stars reinforce MGM’s involvement in arranging the couple to marry. Taylor is often quoted in this respect saying: “All I had to say about it was ‘I do’” (Madsen 170; Wayne Stanwyck 83).

Career changes

Besides these changes in her public private life, Stanwyck’s professional life altered as well. After her Warner Bros. contract ended in December 1934, she went freelance and could thus accept offers from any studio. This was a rather unusual situation for a female star at this time, when most actors were under long-term contracts to a major studio. By 1935, there were roughly forty freelance actors including Adolphe Menjou, Ann Harding, Frederic March, Constance Bennett, and Ronald Colman (“Only Ten” 23). In this context, freelance should be understood as not being under an exclusive, long-term contract with one studio. It does include non-exclusive, short-term contracts for a particular studio. Constance Bennett, Irene Dunne, and Miriam Hopkins were other actresses who began their careers under studio contracts, but chose

to leave their “parent” studios to freelance in the late 1930s. Stanwyck gave two reasons for her independence from the star system. First, she could “hold down her output” to approximately four pictures per year, “believing that too many performances before the public is not compatible with maintaining her vast following.” Second, she could “choose parts she thinks best adapted to her, instead of being compelled to take those offered her because of [long-term] contracts” (Great Man’s press book). Because she was not signed to a studio that would make career and image-related decisions for her, Stanwyck had to be very conscious of her image, but which gave her greater independence and control over her career and image. Carman argues that it is striking that female stars went freelance at a time when “the male-dominated studio system [. . .] manipulated stardom for its own economic gain,” and that we can understand these stars as “business-savvy women who challenged this coercive system by taking a more active role in shaping their career and image” (585-586). I will elaborate on Stanwyck’s freelancing in chapter two.

As a freelance star, Stanwyck maintained her average of four productions per year. Nonetheless, from 1935 onward, Stanwyck’s career went into a slump. This had nothing to do with the number of roles she was offered, but the fact that few of her films were box-office hits.³² One of the successful productions was Stanwyck’s first Western, Annie Oakley (d. George Stevens, US, 1935). Stanwyck played the title role, a backwoods sharpshooter whose shooting skills and rivalry with fellow sharpshooter and world champion Toby Walker (Preston Foster) make her the star of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show. Her skills threaten Toby’s starring role in the show, although a romance blossoms between them. When Toby accidentally shoots Annie in the hand, he is immediately dismissed. Although Annie goes on to be triumphant in the show, she misses Toby, but is reunited with him when he comes to see her perform. The role emphasized independence in Stanwyck’s image; Annie is an independent woman who is not afraid to subvert traditional gender roles by taking on (and out-performing) a man in a masculine activity. Similarly, Stanwyck had just become independent in her career and in her off-screen life. Annie Oakley thus showed a “perfect fit” between the character and Stanwyck’s image (as Ladies of Leisure had done in 1930).

Other post-1935 characters did not fit with Stanwyck’s image as natural, independent, tough, and lower-class. In the second half of the 1930s, Stanwyck played more genteel heroines, for example a college girl in Red Salute (d. Sidney Lanfield, US, 1935) and a Cuban girl of Spanish decent in A Message to Garcia (d. George Marshall, US, 1936), which were a far cry from her earlier tough, lower-class characters. With the enforcement of the Production Code in 1934, scheming gold diggers tended to be replaced by wholesome, genteel characters. A notable example is Olivia de Havilland, whose career began at Warner Bros. when Stanwyck left. Her

sugar-sweet heroines were always beautiful and charming. De Havilland's beauty and youthfulness fitted the wholesome (usually passive) characters she played, whose primary function was to be a pleasure for the eye in, for example, Captain Blood (d. Michael Curtiz, US, 1935) and The Charge of the Light Brigade (d. Michael Curtiz, US, 1936). These types of heroine did not fit the image created for Stanwyck in the early 1930s, which can explain the decline in Stanwyck's fashionability. Nonetheless, Stanwyck's freelancing paid off because she was now able to turn her back on the stereotypical roles she was assigned under her studio contracts. By broadening her range of performances, Stanwyck made herself available to studios as a versatile actress who could play in different genres. When her career picked up in the late 1930s, she was able to use this versatility as a selling point to get the roles she wanted to play. I will examine Stanwyck's versatility as an actress in chapter three.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explained how Stanwyck's early star image was created. When critics and reviewers first noticed Stanwyck's star potential in Ladies of Leisure, they highlighted her natural acting style. Columbia and Warner Bros., to whom Stanwyck was under contract in the first half of the 1930s, took advantage of this, and assigned Stanwyck to roles that emphasized her "emotional acting" ability. I have also demonstrated how Stanwyck's roles in her films for Frank Capra created a "fit" between her natural acting style, her onscreen characters, and discourses of her pre-cinema off-screen life. Stanwyck's association with the lower-class, with natural, and her toughness matched the characteristics of her onscreen characters. By emphasising these traits, Stanwyck could appeal to audiences because she was said to have known the hardships that Depression-era audiences faced. These themes also fitted the bad girl image Warner Bros. created for Stanwyck through her performances in the studio's fallen woman films.

As suggested, during the first half of the decade, Stanwyck's off-screen life was promoted as domestic bliss as opposed to the immoral characters she played onscreen. During the difficult Depression era, the traditional division between gender roles would be promoted and Stanwyck's off-screen image accommodated this. During her marriage to Fay, her dedication to him and her conformity to the traditional domestic ideal were the main subjects of articles focusing on her off-screen life.

Finally, I demonstrated the complications that had to find a place within Stanwyck's image (or that forced it to adjust) when Stanwyck divorced Fay and when she went freelance in 1935. Both events had to be incorporated in her image, which now foregrounded her independence, both as a star/worker and as a single, working mother. This image, however,

soon changed to fit Stanwyck's relationship with MGM star Taylor. At the same time when Stanwyck's career entered a slump, in the second half of the 1930s, her romance with the popular Taylor kept the press interested in her, until her career ascended again in 1939.

The following chapter does not fit the chronological outline of the thesis, but, like this chapter, provides a foundation for further chapters by revealing how Stanwyck operated as a worker within the film industry. It will show that stardom is a process of negotiation, and it will explore the direct agency Stanwyck had in the management of her career and image. Stanwyck was one of the first female performers to freelance in the 1930s and, unlike many other female stars, she only worked under short-term, non-exclusive contracts throughout her career. In this sense, Stanwyck's career in the 1930s and early 1940s anticipated what would become a dominant practice in star employment practices in the post-World War II era, when responsibility for developing star careers devolved increasingly from the studios to talent agencies such as Music Corporation of America (MCA) and the William Morris Agency.

Chapter 2

Agents and Agency: Stanwyck as a Freelance Star

“Barbara’s whole field of interest [. . .] lies in her career. As a free-lance, she is able to work 3x as hard as if she were tied to one studio” (sic) (“The Story” 25). Stanwyck’s freelancing was often commented upon by critics and writers because she was one of the first and one of the few independent female stars during the studio system era. She was also one of the very few women who remained that way throughout their career. As a freelance performer, the responsibility for the management of Stanwyck’s career rested not with a studio but with her agent. Nonetheless, Stanwyck was more involved in the management of her career and image than many contract stars. Of course, the star’s agency is not a given but exists in a dynamic relationship with agents, producers, and other power brokers who determine the star’s economic and ideological value. Barry King argues that “the nature of stardom is determined by the interaction of two phenomena: the organization of competition within Hollywood and the ownership of the star ‘personality image’” (“Stardom” 161). He notes that the star is “ultimately the possessor of [his or her] image, because it is indexically linked to his or her person” (168). This implies that a star such as Stanwyck can use her image as an economic asset, but only once the star is established. When a contract is signed, the star hands over some control of his or her image, such as name and likeness, to the studio. The star can negotiate special provisions to maintain a certain level of self-determination, for example requests for designers, cameramen, and billing order, but the studio ultimately decides how the image will be used (Gaines, Contested 147-148, 156). Freelance stars, especially, suffered from the oligopolistic market where studios used single-buyer control when buying star labour (Gaines, Contested 149). This meant that freelance stars could only maintain control over their image when there was a demand for their labour. Freelance stars that were in high demand by the studios had a stronger bargaining position compared to contract stars, as freelancers could more easily parlay recent successes. Freelancing entailed a higher degree of risk, however, since failure to reach an agreement during the negotiations could result in a loss of work. Many freelance stars, including Stanwyck, worked with overlapping contracts. These were short-term, non-exclusive contracts for only one or two films a year, which stars held simultaneously at two or more studios (Kemper 82). Overlapping contracts with multiple studios gave the star “more freedom in selecting roles [. . .] by increasing the pool of potential projects” (Kemper 82).

This chapter examines Stanwyck’s independence in her professional life through an investigation into her relationship with industrial bodies to protect her image. However, from 1935 onwards, Stanwyck co-operated with talent agents, so she was not fully independent. By

exploring the mechanisms of what Janet Staiger describes as “the monopoly on [a] personality,” (star images are unique and as such a marketable form of individuality) I suggest how Stanwyck and her agents were able to negotiate special provisions in her contracts in the three periods under scrutiny (“Hollywood 1930” 101). These stipulations protected Stanwyck’s image as a major star. They also provided Stanwyck and her agents with a degree of control over her professional life. Here, I look at the Stanwyck persona as a combination of image and labour, using Danae Clark’s concept of “the actor as worker.” Except for Jane Gaines’s Contested Culture, very few researchers (e.g. Carman) have attempted to discuss star contracts and female stars’ agency in their professional lives in the 1930s and 1940s. Through the examination of Stanwyck’s contracts and the special additions to the contracts, this chapter explores how a freelance female star (and her agent) could control her star image and star status. My study thus builds on Gaines’s work on star contracts and adds original research to it by focusing on Stanwyck’s contracts across her career.

As a freelance star in the 1930s and 1940s, Stanwyck had the opportunity of selecting roles, but it is difficult to determine how career-related decisions were made, because most correspondence I read from 1935 onward was sent by Stanwyck’s agent. This is because Stanwyck switched agents after she left Warner Bros. in 1934, and her new agent (Zeppo Marx, and later Alan Miller at Marx, Miller, and Marx) seems to have taken more control over her affairs. Because of a lack of archival material regarding talent agencies, it is difficult to specify what caused the change in the agent’s visibility, as well as Stanwyck’s involvement in her professional life. Because Stanwyck was not tied to a studio for a long period of time it is much more difficult to track her career and the changes in her image compared to such contract stars as Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, or Olivia de Havilland. Studios routinely generated substantial information about their contract stars, but were less keen to invest in promoting freelance performers. Because the field of talent agencies is very under-researched and because information about Stanwyck’s career is dispersed over numerous archives, it is not easy to verify who Stanwyck’s agents were at various times. As Philip Drake notes, researchers who examine Hollywood talent agencies often have to use the “magpie method” to find contractual and agency information via cross-referencing papers from various archives (Drake). This frequently leads to original research, as demonstrated in this chapter. Through the magpie method I have been able to find (most of) the agencies Stanwyck signed with during her career. However, the talent agency business in Hollywood between 1930 and 1950 was in constant motion and large agencies often bought up smaller ones which they either incorporated or left as a subsidiary agency. In his 2010 book Hidden Talent, Tom Kemper examines the business of Hollywood talent agents between 1930 and 1950. Kemper’s book is one of the few to scrutinize

agents in this period, because most researchers focus on the power of talent agents after the collapse of the studio system in the 1950s (see for example Mann, Hollywood; Wasko, Hollywood). Because of the lack of archival material, many of the case studies in Kemper's book are of (large) agencies from which archives are available, such as the Myron Selznick Agency. In my case, many of the agencies Stanwyck signed with either have not made information accessible for researchers after they closed (e.g. smaller agencies such as Zeppo Marx's) or their archives are unavailable (e.g. the William Morris Agency).

The following example demonstrates the complicated nature of the talent agency business and the difficulty of finding Stanwyck's agents. Some time in 1935 (no specific date available) Stanwyck signed with Zeppo Marx's agency--Zeppo Marx, Inc. (Kemper 265). Biographer Simon Louvish claims that Zeppo Marx set up his agency in 1933 and that he was joined by his brother Gummo and Alan Miller in 1937, when the agency was re-named Marx, Miller, and Marx (277). However, Louvish does not provide any evidence for his claims. According to Kemper and Connie Bruck, some time in the late 1930s MCA took over Marx's agency (Kemper 242; Bruck 73). Neither Kemper nor Bruck supply evidence for these approximate dates, which obscures the sources of this information. According to the information in Stanwyck's contracts, MCA eventually acquired Marx's agency in the mid-1940s. These contracts list Alan Miller of Zeppo Marx, Inc. as her agent until May 1945, followed by Alan Miller of Marx, Miller, and Marx, Inc. from October 1945. In October 1947 Stanwyck sent a letter (via MCA) to Warner Bros., to whom she was under contract at the time, that notices to her "should be sent c/o MCA," where Alan Miller remained her agent until at least September 1949.¹ Whether MCA took over Zeppo Marx, Inc. / Marx, Miller, and Marx in the late 1930s and left it as a subsidiary company, or whether it did not take over the company until 1947, or whether it "raided" Alan Miller from the Marx agency--Miller remained Stanwyck's agent during her period at MCA--and he took Stanwyck as a client with him to MCA, is unspecified. For this chapter, it is important to note that Stanwyck changed agencies over the course of her career (see appendix B for a list). This probably happened because she was not happy with the provided services (i.e. securing suitable roles and negotiating special conditions), which was often the main reason for stars to change agencies (Kemper 105). When the two large talent agencies MCA and William Morris gained importance and power in Hollywood in the late 1940s, Stanwyck no longer signed with small agencies such as Zeppo Marx, Inc. She stayed with MCA presumably until the early 1950s and moved via the Jaffe Agency to William Morris during the 1950s, when the corporate agencies ruled the talent agency business.

Here, I focus on Stanwyck's career between 1930 and the early 1950s and I investigate the consequences of Stanwyck's freelancing in three different periods in her professional life: Stanwyck's first contract with Warner Bros. at the start of her career from 1931 through 1934; her one-picture contract with Warner Bros. for The Gay Sisters (d. Irving Rapper, US) in 1942; and her contracts with Hal Wallis Productions in the mid- and late 1940s. The first section examines Stanwyck's involvement in her business affairs. In this period, the presence of her agent in communications with the studio is almost non-existent whereas in the third period I examine, all communications between Stanwyck and the producer were sent via her agent. The second section investigates the use of Stanwyck's star status as a bargaining tool for a one-picture contract. The third section examines Stanwyck's freedom in selecting roles offered by various studios while holding overlapping contracts, and the ways in which she and her agent controlled her image through the negotiation of special conditions in her contracts.

Period 1: Stanwyck at Warner Bros., 1931-1934

To examine the question of Stanwyck's agency during her contract period to Warner Bros., it is necessary to first set out some (remarkable) terms in Stanwyck's contract, which were an indication of her popularity with both audiences and studios. This will be followed by an investigation into Stanwyck's involvement in her career through her right to approve stories for production. It is important to note here that studio correspondence (found at the Warner Bros. Archives) was sent to Stanwyck's home address (or hotel, when she was on a vaudeville tour with her husband) rather than to her agent, Arthur Lyons of A. & S. Lyons. This suggests that Stanwyck took active control over her professional life rather than relying on her agent.

After Stanwyck's quick rise to stardom at Columbia in 1930, she signed a short-term contract with the studio ("Starring Stanwyck" 2). Owing to her success in Ladies of Leisure, Warner Bros. was also interested in signing Stanwyck. As noted previously, the studio had already borrowed Stanwyck from Columbia in July 1930 for the production of Illicit to profit from Stanwyck's box office appeal. While Stanwyck's contract with Columbia was not expected to end until August 1931, Warner Bros. already signed her in September 1930 for her "exclusive services [exclusive only during the shooting period of each film]" for three films per year from August 1931.² This is a tactic known as star raiding. Star raiding is an example of studio competition, which occurred when studios "courted stars whose contracts were nearly up or when studios encouraged stars to break their contracts" (Kemper 13). It was a common procedure to lure stars away from a competing studio and Warner Bros. complained about the procedure to the Association of Motion Picture Producers in 1934, after Stanwyck was courted by various studios when her contract to Warner Bros. was rumoured to end.³ This demonstrates

that she had a high marquee value in both 1930 and 1934. A star's marquee value was important to studios as it could reduce the risk of financing a production because a star could guarantee some certainty in box office revenues. Stars were a studio's most visible asset and they lent prestige to a studio (figure 11) (Belton, American 71).

In December 1930, after Stanwyck signed with Warner Bros. but before the contract would be effective, Warner Bros. wrote to Stanwyck informing her they needed her "immediately for [a] forthcoming production."⁴ Stanwyck was still under contract to Columbia but the studio was willing to loan her to Warner Bros., provided that Stanwyck agreed that Columbia would be "entitled to [her] services in one further production in addition to the optional production" (i.e. that she would extend her contract with them until August 1933). This would conflict with Stanwyck's contract with Warner Bros. which would be effective from August 1931. However, Warner Bros. was willing to delay the effective date of Stanwyck's contract by five months because they presumably wanted to benefit from Stanwyck's popularity in December 1930.⁵ Through 1931 and 1932 Stanwyck moved between productions at Columbia and Warner Bros.

Although she had just recently achieved star status, Stanwyck's contract to Warner Bros. gave her maximum control over her career. Only established stars were allowed such privileged conditions as occasional story approval, limitations to the number of films they were assigned to, and sole star billing (Kemper 41). Stanwyck, however, was permitted all of these.⁶ Although the studio still held all the extension options for the contract (which included an increase in salary from \$100,000 per year in the first year to \$275,000 per year in the fifth year), Stanwyck maintained control over her craft, especially through the clause that gave her story approval (albeit to a certain degree: the stories were "mutually agreeable" between Warner Bros. and Stanwyck).⁷ Because Stanwyck's contract stated that she would have sole star billing, most of her films for Warner Bros. in this period were women's pictures, focusing on Stanwyck's character and thus showcasing Stanwyck as a star. Unlike her later contracts to Warner Bros. in the 1940s, there is no information about the process of negotiation, whether Stanwyck and her agent negotiated these special conditions or whether Warner Bros. offered them directly to lure the new star to sign with them.

FACT NO. 1

WARNER BROS. AND FIRST NATIONAL WILL DELIVER 60* PICTURES FOR 1932-'33**

We promise you just one thing about these 60 pictures—that they will be as good as we know how to make them...*And the past six months have proved that we know how to make good pictures.*

We will match product—not adjectives—with others.

Superlatives are puny compared to the towering Fact that these pictures will be planned and issued by the same production and star talent that have turned out the bulk of the industry's profitable product during the current season.

* * *

We will make NO promises at this time as to the details of the complete list. Such promises have never been kept in the whole history of

FACT NO. 2

These pictures will be covered by The Box-Office Insurance of 22 STAR NAMES

Star followings form the vital nucleus of every exhibitor's "market". The bigger the star, the larger the patronage on which you can definitely count regardless of story or production values.

That is why it is so important to examine Warner Bros.' and First National's star lists and to check them carefully with the star values offered elsewhere.

Box-office records, fan mail, publicity lineups, are eloquent assurance that these glamorous personalities will, on their names alone, bring more money to your ticket window than any other group of players on the screen today.

Enough genuine favorites to supply not one, but several authentic marquee names in every cast... Including the most remarkable collection of established New Stars ever developed in a single season.

GEORGE ARLISS	RUTH CHATTERTON
WILLIAM POWELL	RICHARD BARTHELMESS
KAY FRANCIS	EDWARD G. ROBINSON
JAMES CAGNEY	JOE E. BROWN
BARBARA STANWYCK	JOAN BLONDELL
CONSTANCE BENNETT	GEORGE BRENT
DOUG. FAIRBANKS, JR.	ANN DVORAK
LORETTA YOUNG	DAVID MANNERS
WARREN WILLIAM	GUY KIBBEE
BETTE DAVIS	VIVIENNE OSBORNE

10 each from Warner Bros. Film National.

2-5 FOUR-STAR-WEST. (See page 2)

VITAPHONE, INC., DISTRIBUTORS

Figure 11: Advertisement for Warner Bros. in *Variety* (7 June 1932), which shows how stars were used as "box-office insurance."

Story approval and independence

While Stanwyck had both an agent and a lawyer (Charles W. Cradick), she seemed to take control over key aspects of her career. For example, she exploited the clause that gave her story approval by turning down numerous scripts she found unsuitable. Stanwyck rejected the first story “Top O’ the Hill” in June 1931, but agreed to perform in Safe in Hell (d. William A. Wellman, US, 1931). However, according to Variety she was pulled from the production because “she played the loose lady too often.”⁸ Safe in Hell was replaced by the story “Tarnished” in September 1931, which Stanwyck rejected. She turned down a third story entitled “Tinsel Girl” on 10 November before agreeing on 23 November to her first contract picture So Big.⁹ For her second picture in the first year of her contract with Warner Bros., Stanwyck suggested Mud Lark, the recently published novel by Arthur Stringer. In a telegram to Warner Bros. head of production Darryl Zanuck in February 1932, Stanwyck wrote that “[m]ore than ever I would like to do Mud Lark if you think it to soon after So Big save it for later [. . .]” (sic).¹⁰ She rejected another story and pushed again for Mud Lark: “Did not care for ‘Classified’ would still like to do Mud Lark [. . .].”¹¹ This discussion took place via telegrams because Stanwyck was in New York, appearing in the vaudeville show of her husband. It is unlikely that Stanwyck would have first conversed with her agent and then sent these telegrams from New York while her agent could have sent similar (possibly more polite) messages to Warner Bros.

Further evidence that Stanwyck took her career in her own hands during this contract period is provided by a number of letters sent by Warner Bros. general counsel Roy Obringer to Stanwyck’s home address in “very informal language,” to “obtain a quick signature” for story approval. The letters indicate that these legal documents had to be presented to Stanwyck in layman’s terms so that she would understand what she was signing. This once more suggests that she handled business herself, rather than being guided by her agent about what she had to sign. Zanuck’s executive assistant, William Dover, asked for “a very informal letter” to be written to Stanwyck “such as Mr. Zanuck would write [. . .]. If you [Obringer] can reduce your letter to something of this nature I think it will obtain a quick signature.”¹² The following letter was sent to Stanwyck: “Dear Barbara: Now that we are all set on the story ‘Baby Face’, [we need to] satisfy our New York Legal Department to secure your approval of the story before we start production.” Standard requests for Stanwyck’s approval were very different: “Dear Miss Stanwyck: With reference to our contract of employment [. . .] dated September 29, 1930, as amended, and, in conformance [. . .] with the third paragraph [. . .] we are submitting herewith [. . .].”¹³ Besides these simplified letters, Warner Bros. also notified Stanwyck’s attorney Cradick--rather than her agent--that it was necessary for Cradick to “impress [Stanwyck] with the

necessity of these [story] agreements” because Stanwyck was known to be “lax in returning any papers.”¹⁴ This again confirms Stanwyck’s control over the management of her professional life.

It is difficult to determine whether Stanwyck had much influence over the creation of her roles after she approved the story. Materials from various archives suggest that she played a major part in the creation of her characters. For example, a 1933 Warner Bros. biography of Stanwyck notes that she “is interested in writing in a mild sort of way” and that she “had a hand in writing the final scenes of Illicit.”¹⁵ Through the inclusion of this information, Warner Bros. constructed a particular image of Stanwyck as part of the writing team for the film. However, because the biography includes information that I have not encountered anywhere else (such as these statements about Stanwyck’s interest in writing), I do not know how reliable this source is. Nevertheless, files at the Warner Bros. Archives include a letter from August 1933, which Stanwyck wrote to Warner Bros. (again from her home address) regarding the development of her story entitled “Blood of China.” According to the letter, Stanwyck had developed the story for a future film production in which she expected to play the lead character. Stanwyck’s letter informed the studio that the story should be credited to her as it was “based upon my [Stanwyck’s] ideas and suggestions outlined by me to your Mr. Wallis,” thereby protecting her creative control.¹⁶ The story was not developed into a film. Stanwyck’s creation of a story and a role for herself evidences of her involvement in developing her career. Although stars often suggested stories in which they liked to perform, the creation of a story by a star as a vehicle for him- or herself was uncommon (Behlmer 127, 305-306).

During this period, fan magazines typically portrayed Stanwyck as “independent,” “hot-tempered,” and wanting “to get out of pictures” (Fletcher 31; Grant 60).¹⁷ Many magazines also discussed Stanwyck’s love for her husband and her threats to quit Hollywood to become a housewife (see chapter one). Although Stanwyck was independent in the sense that she took control of her professional life, materials from the Warner Bros. Archives do not show many flares of “hot-tempered” diva behaviour.¹⁸ This demonstrates a discrepancy between Stanwyck’s public off-screen image and her (mostly) invisible professional life. The only example in the Warner Bros. Archives which demonstrates Stanwyck’s defiant attitude and hot temper is a telegram from Stanwyck to Jack Warner in 1933 with regards to the billing for British Agent (d. Michael Curtiz, US, 1934). Here she states that “under no condition would I consider any player being billed equally to myself [. . .].”¹⁹ Sole star billing confirmed Stanwyck’s star status and explaining why she had turned down British Agent, Stanwyck said that she “saw no reason why I should play second fiddle to anyone. I’ve worked too hard to get to the top to give up top billing for no good reason” (Mook 57). She continued to receive first billing between the end of

her Warner Bros. contract in 1934 and her return to Warner Bros. in 1942 for the production of The Gay Sisters, with the exception of four films--A Message to Garcia, This is My Affair, Meet John Doe (d. Frank Capra, US, 1941), and Ball of Fire. Unlike Stanwyck's Warner Bros. films in the first half of the 1930s, The Gay Sisters was not made under a short-term contract, but on a one-picture basis. This film is therefore the production under scrutiny in the following section.

Period 2: The Production of The Gay Sisters, 1941-1942

This section gives an insight into various factors determining star casting in this period. I examine Stanwyck as part of a generational cohort of female stars and her position as a freelance actress for the production of The Gay Sisters. The film tells the story of Fiona Gaylord (Stanwyck) who brings herself and her sisters Evelyn (Geraldine Fitzgerald) and Susana (Nancy Coleman) to ruin in her fight to retain the family mansion. I chose this production because it demonstrates how Stanwyck's recent successes prior to The Gay Sisters benefited her and her agent in negotiations for this one-picture contract. This section demonstrates how Stanwyck and her agent were able to use Stanwyck's image and star status as a bargaining tool, and how the special conditions negotiated for this one-picture contract differed from the ones for Stanwyck's short-term contracts.

In early 1941, Warner Bros. bought the rights to Stephen Longstreet's recent novel The Gay Sisters, aiming to use it as a starring vehicle for Bette Davis (Sikov 195). On 5 March 1941, Variety featured an article "Bette Will Be Gay," noting that Davis had been assigned the female lead (3). Davis balked at playing the leading role of Fiona Gaylord, however, as she was dissatisfied with the initial casting of the other characters.²⁰ Although she notified Warner Bros. of her discontent about The Gay Sisters in May, internal memos and tentative casting sheets indicate that Davis was still considered for the role until late September 1941. Warner Bros. included in the list of possible candidates for Fiona, in order of preference: Davis, Katharine Hepburn, Rosalind Russell, Irene Dunne, Stanwyck, and Ginger Rogers.²¹ It is interesting to see Stanwyck and Rogers being considered for the same role again, as they were for Ball of Fire which was produced in 1941, but for a completely different character this time. This demonstrates both actresses' versatility. The stars considered for the role of Fiona were part of the cohort of female stars who started their film careers in the 1930s. This generation had already demonstrated their value for the film industry through, for example, their inclusion in Variety's annual popularity list or in the Quigley Poll.²²

Of the stars on the initial casting shortlist, Davis was the only one contracted to Warner Bros. The other actresses had to be loaned from other studios or had to sign a new contract if

they were freelancers, as Stanwyck was. In the case of a loan, Warner Bros. would pay the star's salary plus an average of seventy-five percent to the studio that held the star's contract or, in return, Warner Bros. could loan one of its own stars to the renting studio (Huettig 309). If Warner Bros. chose a star from its own roster, it would not cost the studio more than that star's salary that would be paid per week anyway, even if the star was not working. Signing a freelance star, however, was rather a gamble. This star would have to demonstrate good marquee value so that the film would make enough money to re-coup the investment of hiring that star. Rather than being paid per week, freelance stars were paid per film and so the cost of freelance stars' salaries could not be spread over the studio's yearly budget.

This per-film-salary increased the cost of the particular film the freelancer was assigned to. A budget sheet for The Gay Sisters dated 26 December 1941 demonstrates this. It lists the costs for the cast salaries: Stanwyck received \$100,000 for the role of Fiona--her standard salary at the time--, Olivia de Havilland would receive \$19,905 for the role of Susanna, Fitzgerald received \$15,000 for the role of Evelyn, and George Brent received \$26,000 for his role as the male lead. In comparison, Warner Bros. top contract star Davis received a salary of approximately \$50,000 per film in the same period.²³ De Havilland, Fitzgerald, and Brent were all under contract to Warner Bros. at the time. Stanwyck's star salary significantly increased the cost of production, which is one of the reasons why the stars in the remaining roles are Warner Bros. contract stars. Stanwyck's marquee value had gone up with her performances in the popular films released just prior to the production of The Gay Sisters: The Lady Eve (d. Preston Sturges, US, 1941), Meet John Doe, and her later Oscar-nominated performance in Ball of Fire.²⁴ Her increased marquee value could draw larger audiences to The Gay Sisters, which could lead to a larger profit for Warner Bros.

Contract negotiations with Stanwyck and her agent began on 9 December 1941. As Gaines suggests, on top of the basic contractual agreement, powerful stars such as Stanwyck could negotiate special conditions, which were a means for "working out conflicts between studio and star over the interpretation of the star image" (Contested 146, 148). For female stars these provisions often concerned their costuming and appearance. For example, most of Stanwyck's contracts included a clause ensuring that she would be costumed by Paramount designer Edith Head.²⁵ Head had first costumed Stanwyck for Remember the Night (d. Mitchell Leisen, US, 1940) and would continue to do so for another twenty-three films.



Billing size:

Stanwyck: 100%

Brent – Fitzgerald: 75%

(Title 100%)

Figure 12a: Opening credit from Warner Bros.'s The Gay Sisters shows the difference in billing size negotiated for Stanwyck's one-picture contract and her short-term contract for Christmas in Connecticut (figure 12b).



Billing size:

Stanwyck: 100%

Morgan: 100%

Greenstreet: 100%

(Title: 100%)

Figure 12b: The opening credit for Warner Bros.'s Christmas in Connecticut which Stanwyck made under a short-term contract and which gives her the same billing as her co-stars.

On 11 December 1941 Stanwyck signed a standard one-picture contract with Warner Bros. for The Gay Sisters. Under the heading “Screen credit,” Stanwyck and her agent demanded first *star* billing (name above the title in the same typeface size or bigger) on the screen and in all advertising and publicity.²⁶ This contrasts with the billing arrangements for the film Christmas in Connecticut (d. Peter Godfrey, US, 1945) which Stanwyck made a few years later under a short-term, non-exclusive contract with Warner Bros. As a contract star Stanwyck was given co-star billing (in the same type face size) with two other Warner Bros. stars rather than top star billing (figure 12).²⁷ This contract stipulated that Stanwyck would receive “first female” star billing rather than top star billing.²⁸ Stanwyck also received co-star (in second position) billing for two of the three other Warner Bros. films made under this contract. This billing arrangement depended on the importance of her character in the film and the star status of her male co-stars. It suggests, however, that as a contract star, Stanwyck and her agent could not secure similar provisions to the ones in the one-picture contract.

In a supplementary agreement to Stanwyck’s contract for The Gay Sisters, Stanwyck and her agent “want[ed] a paragraph providing that George Brent will do the male lead; that Olivia de Havilland will appear in the picture; that Henry Blanke will produce it; and that Irving Rapper will direct.”²⁹ Although major stars often had cameraman approval and/or director approval, this is a long and specific list of provisions (Gaines, Contested 149). The inclusion of a former London theatre director and two popular Warner Bros. stars ensured a degree of quality of the film.³⁰ De Havilland was replaced at the last moment by unknown Warner Bros. contract player Nancy Coleman, which demonstrates that Warner Bros. had the power to overturn part of this special provision.³¹

Publicity materials for the film visually set Stanwyck apart from the rest of the cast, either by putting her in the foreground of an advertisement or by giving her costume a colour that made her stand out from her surroundings (figure 13). Film critics and reviewers also singled Stanwyck out in comments such as: “Barbara Stanwyck Scores a Hit,” and “the film relies principally [on] the zestful performance given by Barbara Stanwyck.”³² Written publicity statements from Warner Bros. and the film’s press book, however, did not pay special attention to Stanwyck’s appearance in the film, except mention that she was playing the female lead. They supplied already known information about the star such as “being the most easy-going star in Hollywood” who has a “lack of temperament,” and “a freelance player” who is “a willing subject for newspaper photographers,” providing a form of continuation of Stanwyck’s image.³³ Because Stanwyck was signed to a one-picture contract, the studio did not make much effort to promote Stanwyck in any other way than in relation to the film.

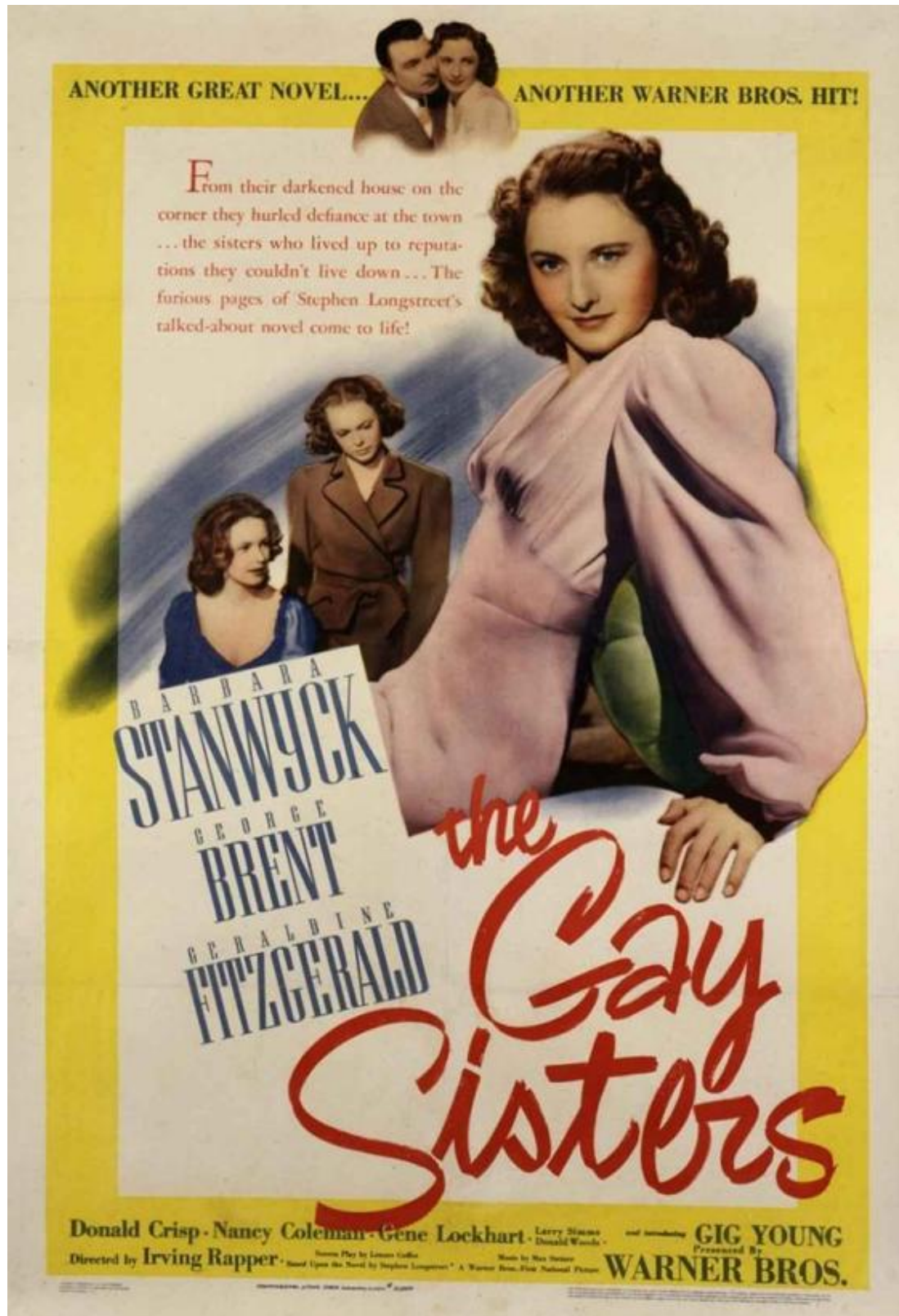


Figure 13a: A poster for Warner Bros.'s The Gay Sisters foregrounds the picture of Stanwyck through its size in relation to the pictures of the other actresses.



Figure 13b: A lobby card for Warner Bros.'s *The Gay Sisters* shows Stanwyck positioned in the middle and in front of Coleman and Fitzgerald. Her red dress also stands out from the yellow background and the blue and green dresses of the other two actresses.

The most unusual provision in Stanwyck's contract was that she could approve "any picture that may be selected [for publication]."³⁴ This is remarkable since standard contracts included the clause that the contracting studio "shall have the right to photograph and/or otherwise produce, reproduce, transmit, exhibit, distribute and exploit [. . .] any and all of [the actor's] acts, poses, plays and appearances [. . .]."³⁵ This special condition allowed Stanwyck to approve the photo that would be on the cover of the film version of the source novel. So far I have not encountered this provision in any of Stanwyck's other contracts nor is it a common feature in any star contract (Gaines, *Contested* 161-162). This was a unique condition that gave Stanwyck and her agent an extraordinary degree of control over the use of Stanwyck's star image in the film.

The Warner Bros. Archives do not provide documentation why Stanwyck, as a freelance performer, was chosen for the leading role in *The Gay Sisters* instead of other non-Warner Bros. stars such as Hepburn, Russell, or Dunne who were above Stanwyck on the casting list. One reason for this could be that because none of them were attached to the studio and only their costs and availability mattered to Warner Bros., when the stars deemed unsuitable, no information regarding them was saved. It is therefore difficult to pinpoint whether Stanwyck was chosen for her image, her status, or her availability. Most likely it is a combination of these three reasons. The following analysis examines contracts that provided Stanwyck and her agent with more influence in the choice of roles than the one-picture contract did. The short-term contracts did not give them as much control over the use of Stanwyck's image, but I will demonstrate how Stanwyck and her agent were able to negotiate other provisions that enabled them to protect Stanwyck's image and in particular her status as a star.

Period 3: Stanwyck and Hal Wallis Productions, 1944-1950

The contracts with Hal Wallis Productions reveal how Stanwyck and her representative used her marquee value as a bargaining tool and as a means of protecting her image and status. As a popular star, it was important for Stanwyck to protect her status within the industry, and understanding how she and her agent were able to do this during a period which was arguably the height of her career, demonstrates the hierarchal specialisation that, according to Barry King, distinguishes stars from other film performers ("Stardom" 157). I have chosen to focus on Stanwyck's contracts with Hal Wallis Productions because Hal Wallis was an independent producer and as such took up an unusual position in relation to the studio system. Wallis and Stanwyck had made a number of films together when they were both under contract at Warner Bros. in what Wallis later termed "those good days" in the early 1930s, which is probably one of the reasons why Stanwyck signed with Wallis almost immediately after he became an

independent producer.³⁶ I will set out the details of the contracts that demonstrate Stanwyck's star power, as well as the provisions made by Stanwyck and her agent for the management of her image. Unlike Stanwyck's 1930s Warner Bros. contract period, her agent (Alan Miller at Marx, Miller and Marx, and later at MCA) plays a prominent role this time. All communications between Stanwyck and Wallis went via her agent or her lawyer. It is thus difficult to determine how much input Stanwyck had in contract negotiations and in maintaining her image. Therefore, in this section I presume that Stanwyck and her agent co-operated in all decisions.

1944 contract

In November 1944 Stanwyck signed an option contract with Hal Wallis Productions under which only The Strange Love of Martha Ivers (d. Lewis Milestone, US, 1946) was made. In November 1947 her contract was renegotiated and renewed, this time for three years.³⁷ Hal Wallis had been head of production at Warner Bros. but in 1944, after a fallout with the studio, he set up his own production company, including a stock company of players. According to Thomas Schatz, the wartime period was a booming time for independent producers (Boom 178-179). Most independent producers, however, still had major studios behind them that provided financing and production facilities. Wallis and his partner Joseph Hazen set up a distribution and production deal with Paramount (Wallis and Higham 114). This enabled them to borrow Paramount stars, as well as loan their own stars to Paramount, hence Stanwyck's large number of one-picture contracts with Paramount in this period.³⁸ Most of Wallis's own players were new actors and actresses whom he "moved from picture to picture until they became well-known" (Wallis and Higham 115). Wallis signed Kirk Douglas, Burt Lancaster, and Lizabeth Scott, as well as more famous freelance stars such as Stanwyck. He built his new stars by co-starring them with well-known players so that the new faces got exposed to a wider audience. As Wallis said in his autobiography: "I costarred Kirk with Barbara Stanwyck in The Strange Love of Martha Ivers. I knew I was taking a risk pitting a newcomer against that powerhouse, Stanwyck, but she was extraordinarily considerate and played unselfishly with him in every scene. The biggest stars appreciate the fact that they shine the brightest with a strong supporting cast" (sic) (116).

Stanwyck's 1944 contract with Hal Wallis Productions included her "standard" demands: Edith Head as her costume designer, Stanwyck's choice of hairdresser, working hours to be between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., and a salary of at least \$10,000 per week for a minimum of ten weeks per production.³⁹ Besides offering her audience a continuation of her image by having the same costume designer and hairdresser in most of her films, Stanwyck and her agent also protected her status as a star with the inclusion of a star salary (\$100,000 per production or

more) and by curtailing her working hours (Stanley X1). Screen credit arrangements in Stanwyck's contract accorded her either first star billing, or co-star billing with a "recognized male or female Star" (sic).⁴⁰ Screen credit is a marketing tool: it demonstrates high quality of the film through the credits of stars and important directors. The actor's place in the credits can also build stardom or confirm star status. Unlike the credits for writers, directors, and producers, credits for actors could (and still can) blow a production deal (Dougherty). Stanwyck and her agent were aware of the importance of screen credit and they complained when Wallis decided to co-star Stanwyck with Lizabeth Scott in The Strange Love of Martha Ivers (d. Lewis Milestone, US, 1946). Through her lawyer, Stanwyck let Wallis know that she would "not be co-starred with any person other than 'a recognized male or female Star.'" The letter stated that Scott had "not attained the position of a 'recognized Star,' as such term is used and understood in the motion picture industry" and that "the provisions [regarding billing] are for the protection of [Stanwyck's] reputation and public standing."⁴¹ The motion picture industry's understanding of "a recognized Star" is that the performer should have previously received star billing. This definition can be derived from Stanwyck's later contracts with Paramount, which rephrased the special condition to avoid a similar dispute, and which stated that "any player [. . .] co-starred with Miss Stanwyck must have received co-star billing on some previous picture."⁴² Wallis's answer via his attorney was only that Scott had indeed "attained the position of a recognized star."⁴³ Scott had received star billing in You Came Along (d. John Farrow, US, 1945), her first and only film before the production of The Strange Love of Martha Ivers. She was therefore co-starred in second female position. The billing arrangements for this short-term contract were similar to the ones in the short-term contract that Stanwyck held simultaneously with Warner Bros. and where she and her agent were also unable to negotiate sole star billing credit, as they could in most of her one-picture contracts.⁴⁴

1947 contract

In 1947 Stanwyck's renewed contract to Hal Wallis Productions covered a three-year period, for one film per year. The films were already decided upon, so Stanwyck signed knowing the stories and the roles she would play. These films were Sorry, Wrong Number (d. Anatole Litvak, US, 1948), The File on Thelma Jordon (d. Robert Siodmak, US, 1950), and The Furies (d. Anthony Mann, US, 1950). Stanwyck's contract had been renegotiated to reflect her increased marquee value and Stanwyck now received \$10,000 per week with ten weeks guaranteed payment and 10% of the gross receipts up to \$50,000.⁴⁵ In the late 1940s, when more actors freelanced, receiving a percentage of the gross receipts became a more common practice for stars than it had been before, when most actors were under long-term contracts (Kemper 148). Often, stars would take a cut in their pay in exchange for a share of the profits (Kemper

150). Stanwyck, however, maintained her standard salary, and the percentage deal was added on top of that. Another two options in the contract (if taken up after the three years) would pay her \$15,000 per week, but no percentage of the gross receipts.

Although it is not specified in her contract (since the stories had been agreed upon before signing), it seems that Stanwyck had story approval here as well. A letter from Wallis to Stanwyck (sent to her agent at MCA) states that “*pursuant to your request* the [. . .] motion picture photoplay shall be based upon the story entitled ‘Sorry, Wrong Number’ instead of the story ‘Be Still My Love’ [. . .]” (emphasis added).⁴⁶ For an unspecified reason, Stanwyck wanted to perform in Sorry, Wrong Number. The film was based on a popular Suspense radio play from 1943 by Lucille Fletcher that was re-enacted several times (Solomon 25). The 1943 radio version was essentially a one-woman story and although the film altered this by giving more prominence to the other characters and settings, the female lead (Leona Stevenson) remained the centre of the film. The story was well-suited for a female star as it focused on controlling, invalid Leona (Stanwyck) who overhears the plotting of her own murder over the telephone when she tries to phone her husband (Burt Lancaster) at his office. She is alone, cannot leave her bed, and passes “through all the stages of irritation, self-pity, [. . .] anger [and] terror” when she finds out that her husband is having her killed to collect her life insurance to pay for his shady drug deals (“Sorry” Life 71). As she gets more suspicious, Leona also gets more hysterical and is literally paralyzed with fear as she imagines that the murderers will come for her. Leona’s only contact to the outside world is the telephone which is also the cause of her fears. According to Amy Lawrence, Leona controls the film’s narrative through the telephone and she “is the one who makes sense of the narrative, and as such becomes [the audience’s] [. . .] auditing spectator within the text” (131). The film is part of the female gothic cycle in which Stanwyck starred during the mid- and late 1940s (see chapter three) where the central focus of the film is a woman’s paranoia. In this case it is Leona’s anxiety of overhearing that because of her husband, she is going to be killed. Stanwyck received her fourth Academy Award nomination for this role. Paramount publicity materials noted Stanwyck’s preference for “meaty roles” such as in Sorry, Wrong Number: “These are the type of meaty roles you can sink your teeth in. The most unsympathetic roles are often the most interesting to play. [. . .] They are the kind of parts [. . .] remembered most vividly by audiences.”⁴⁷ The female lead in “Be Still My Love,” on the other hand, can be considered a less “meaty” role compared to the role of Leona. In “Be Still My Love,” the main character is Wilma Tuttle, a prudish psychology professor who tries to save her career by hiding a murder that she committed in self-defence. Wilma is a sympathetic character who has done nothing wrong besides concealing the crime, whereas Leona is a controlling, demanding, spoiled, domineering woman who drives her

husband to take out a contract on her life. “Be Still My Love” was entitled The Accused (d. William Dieterle, US, 1949) and produced by Hal Wallis Productions with Loretta Young as the female lead.

While Stanwyck was under contract to Wallis, she also held a non-exclusive contract with Warner Bros. Because Stanwyck was under contract to two studios, she could select roles offered to her by both producers. The Warner Bros. contract was more lucrative than Wallis’s because Stanwyck’s business manager, Morgan Maree, told Warner Bros. that the initial contract they offered Stanwyck “was not particularly equitable, and [Stanwyck] could get much, much more in the current market.”⁴⁸ Following this, Stanwyck gained story, director, producer, and leading man approval. She also received eleven weeks guaranteed payment rather than ten weeks, but no share of the profits.⁴⁹ The contracts also allowed Stanwyck to make one picture outside the Warner Bros. and Wallis productions.⁵⁰ Through Wallis’s production and distribution deal with Paramount, Stanwyck often featured in Paramount productions during this period, on a one-picture contract basis. For her first two films for Paramount in 1945 and 1946, she received her standard salary of \$100,000 per picture and either first or second billing.⁵¹ In March 1949, after Stanwyck was nominated for an Academy Award for Sorry, Wrong Number, her “fair market value” was established--by her agent and Hal Wallis Productions--at \$112,500 (excluding the percentage of gross receipts) for the production of The File on Thelma Jordon.⁵² For her last loan-out to Paramount from Wallis’s production company in 1949 for “I Married a Dead Man,” later entitled No Man of Her Own (d. Mitchell Leisen, US, 1950), Stanwyck’s contract showed that her market value had again increased because of the popularity of her previous film The File on Thelma Jordon, and she now received \$150,000 per film. The contract also affirmed that she not only had choice of make-up artist and hairdresser, but also had cameraman approval.⁵³ As with the case study of The Gay Sisters, it is obvious that freelancing offered a strong bargaining position as the star and agent could more easily parlay on the star’s popularity and on his or her market value.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined Stanwyck’s position as a worker in the Hollywood film industry, focusing on three case studies across her career. The influence of her agent in contract negotiations is difficult to determine as the research for this chapter is based on information from studios’ and producers’ archives, rather than from the talent agencies’ archives (which are inaccessible). I demonstrated that as a freelance actress, Stanwyck (and her agent) had more creative control over her career than contract stars, as she could choose between roles offered to her by various studios and was in a better position to negotiate contractual demands.

As noted, during her first contract to Warner Bros., Stanwyck seemed to have had almost absolute control over her craft and her career. The invisibility of Stanwyck's agent, Arthur Lyons, in most communications between Stanwyck and Warner Bros., and Stanwyck's home address as her main correspondence address suggest that Stanwyck handled most of her professional life herself. Her right of sole star billing and story approval show that Stanwyck had a high degree of control over her star image. These special conditions also demonstrate her importance to the studio as a new star. I then revealed that, as a freelance star, in 1941 Stanwyck and her agent were able to negotiate special conditions in her one-picture contract to Warner Bros. that were not possible to achieve with short-term contracts. These special conditions stipulated high production values (showcasing Stanwyck as a star worthy of such vehicles), but also provisions for the continuity of her image, and in the case of The Gay Sisters even control over the use of her onscreen image in publicity for the film. This was an unusual condition in a star's contract and gave Stanwyck and her agent full control over the use of her image in the promotion of the film. That Stanwyck's salary considerably increased the film's production costs was apparently out-weighed by her popularity and the likelihood of Stanwyck's name securing profits for the film. While Stanwyck was under contract to Hal Wallis Productions in the mid- and late 1940s, she was simultaneously under contract to Warner Bros. and both contracts allowed her to make one other outside picture. This prevented Stanwyck from overwork and overexposure. The films in which Stanwyck appeared for Hal Wallis Productions during the run of her second contract had been selected in agreement with both Stanwyck (and her agent) and Wallis, before the contract was signed. This gave Stanwyck and her agent control over the continuation of her image and over her craft. As I have suggested, arrangements regarding screen credit, working hours, and salary in her contracts to Hal Wallis Productions enabled Stanwyck and her agent to protect her status as a star.

Furthermore, I demonstrated that stardom is a process of negotiation, and that Stanwyck's agency in the management of her career was influenced by her popularity and her status as a freelancer. Stanwyck and her agent were able to use Stanwyck's popularity as a bargaining tool for contract negotiations to maintain control over her image and status. I showed that Stanwyck's stardom was indeed a process of agency, as Barry King argues, which is particularly obvious as Stanwyck was situated outside the dominant practice of the star system. This meant that she was not governed by the workings of a studio, but that Stanwyck was directly involved in the control of her image and professional life.

The conclusions from this chapter should be kept in mind when reading the following chapters, which will continue the discourse on Stanwyck's career and image in chronological order. Stanwyck's image in the 1940s can best be described as a mix of contrasts. Onscreen and

off-screen she was both vulnerable and tough, and the films she performed in ranged from drama to comedy. Publicity materials and media coverage depicted her off-screen life as a picture of domestic, marital bliss with matinee-idol Robert Taylor. By contrast, the characters she played onscreen had a gutsy perseverance, were independent, often aggressive, and very rarely accommodated within traditional domestic life. In the next chapter I examine how these diverse elements were used in Stanwyck's image, as well as questions of representation that surfaced in her image in the period 1940-1949.

Chapter 3

A Versatile Woman: Stanwyck in the War and Post-War Eras

Stanwyck's freelancing paid off in the 1940s. The majority of her films made *Variety*'s annual "top grosser" list and a headline for the film *My Reputation* (d. Curtis Bernhardt, US, 1946) even promoted Stanwyck as "Box-Office Barbara" (10-11).¹ As suggested in chapter one, Stanwyck's status as an independent star and her image as natural and unglamorous set her apart from other female stars in her cohort. Stanwyck's independence also meant that she could choose roles offered to her by all studios. During the studio system era, each studio constructed an individual style and focused on certain genres or story types as a means of diversification. For example, Warner Bros. had the reputation as "the working man's studio," and Paramount was said to have "European stylishness" (Belton, *American* 76-78). Stanwyck's performances for the various studios resulted in a collection of different roles. Her popularity in these films also generated a high demand for her services. The 1940s brought great transformations for Stanwyck and for the US as a whole, and World War II had a major influence on popular entertainment. War themes occurred in every genre. Because her career was arguably at its height during the 1940s, I will consider the social influences in Stanwyck's career. Stanwyck's image became more diversified and broader due to shifts in the industry, culture, and society. This led to the striking development of her versatility which was highlighted by the media. Their discussions about Stanwyck's performances also intensified what Stanwyck meant to Hollywood as a performer.

I will first examine the key aspects of Stanwyck's versatility and how the war impacted on her career and the roles she played. I also investigate the benefits of her versatility in the labour market. The diversity of Stanwyck's roles in the war and post-war eras raises questions of representation, in particular concerning the models of womanhood she offered her fans. This is even more important when considering the changing roles of women in US society in the 1940s. I will therefore discuss the roles of women in the war, as well as Stanwyck's contributions to the war effort. Stanwyck's image, along with those of other female stars, changed during the 1940s in response to profound fluctuation in the social and cultural positions of women. I therefore consider the diverse models of womanhood Stanwyck offered fans in her films--particularly in wartime production trends--and her off-screen life. Finally, I consider how and why Stanwyck was suddenly glamorized in the 1940s, and how this fitted in her image.

Stanwyck's Versatility

"Miss Stanwyck Proves Versatility in Films" is the title of an article from the Los Angeles Examiner in the early 1940s, which stated that Stanwyck was "one of Hollywood's few actresses versatile enough to step from comedy to drama with equal success."² Stanwyck was nominated for three Academy Awards during the 1940s, which reflected her versatility as well as her popularity and acting ability. She had been nominated for her performance in the maternal drama Stella Dallas in 1937, and in the 1940s for her performances in a comedy (Ball of Fire), a crime thriller (Double Indemnity) and a female gothic (Sorry, Wrong Number). Fan magazines and news papers also highlighted Stanwyck's versatility, and I demonstrate how Stanwyck's image (or part of it) was used in the various roles she played, showing the pliability of her image.³

Stanwyck's publicity biographies routinely mentioned that "[h]er screen characterizations have established her versatility [. . .]," and that she delivered "consistently superior and versatile performances."⁴ In 1944 Screen Guide called Stanwyck "the unpredictable," noting that "she baffled us again" because she was first "identified as The Lady Eve, then a nightclub dancer in Ball of Fire and later as a Lady of Burlesque," and was now playing a "cold, calculating, evil woman" in Double Indemnity.⁵ In 1947 Hollywood Citizen-News observed that Stanwyck's film My Reputation was "classified as a 'woman's picture,'" and that her film California (d. John Farrow, US, 1947) was "classified as 'a man's picture,'" which, the article concluded, meant that Stanwyck was a "versatile actress who manages to please everybody."⁶ Stanwyck's filmography (see appendix A) shows that Stanwyck made fewer films during the 1940s than during the (early) 1930s, but the roles and films were more diverse.

One of the genres that Stanwyck successfully added to her repertoire during the war was the screwball comedy (e.g. The Lady Eve, Ball of Fire and You Belong to Me [d. Wesley Ruggles, US, 1941]). Richard Jewell suggests that this subgenre is the "most well-known and critically acclaimed comedy form of the 1930s and 40s" (229). It is a form of romantic comedy that "celebrates the madcap battle of the sexes rather than the security of stable family life" (Walsh 144). Critics described Stanwyck's performance in the screwball comedy The Lady Eve in 1941 as a turning point in her career. In the film, Stanwyck plays Jean, a card-sharp who tries to dupe upper-class Charles Pike (Henry Fonda) but falls in love with him. According to a review in fan magazine Silver Screen, for example, Stanwyck "discards her dramatic personality and emerges as a gay and glamorous charmer-comedienne."⁷ The screwball comedy declined rapidly after the US entered the war because the films were considered too frivolous and immature compared to the hard reality of daily life (Jewell 230).

Stanwyck also performed in Westerns. For example, in 1942 she made The Great Man's Lady (d. William A. Wellman, US).⁸ Here, Stanwyck plays a pioneer woman, Hannah Hoyt, who sacrifices everything to see her husband become an important politician. The role was a continuation of Stanwyck's previous characters: a tough, independent, wise-cracking woman whose protective façade covers tenderness and softness. However, the production of Westerns during and immediately after the war declined due to a general shift from the adventure film to the combat film, which could explain why her two Westerns from the 1940s were not successful at the box office (Schatz, Boom 226).

Stanwyck played in a significant number of dramas in the 1940s, which built upon her early-1930s image. Most of the dramas, such as The Lady Gambles (d. Michael Gordon, US, 1949), The Gay Sisters, and The Other Love (d. André de Toth, US, 1947), were women's pictures. Stanwyck's performances in these films earned rave reviews for her acting, reconfirming Stanwyck's image as a "dramatic" actress. Writing about The Gay Sisters, for example, the Telegram mentioned that "she is complete mistress of the delicate control that marks the difference between emotional excitement and mere scenery chewing." Similarly, a review for My Reputation stated that "Miss Stanwyck [. . .] has, without a doubt, achieved the heights as a great dramatic actress."⁹ Stanwyck's acting was used as a production value for these films.¹⁰

In the final years of the war Stanwyck performed in crime thrillers such as Double Indemnity and The Strange Love of Martha Ivers that returned her to her 1930s roles as a ruthless gold digger. The emergence of this film cycle was the result of industrial and social-cultural shifts, which I will discuss in the following section. These dark crime thrillers featured Stanwyck as a hard-boiled, ambitious, and independent woman who uses men to get what she wants. Her characters also reject their place in patriarchal society as mothers and housewives. In this sense, these characters were a more explicit version of Stanwyck's calculating bad girls from the 1930s.

Stanwyck's performances in popular wartime cycles such as the crime thriller and the screwball comedy gave her better exposure than less popular genres and cycles (such as the Western) did (Schatz, Boom 109, 232-239). As a freelance star she could choose the roles she wanted from all studios and was not limited to specific vehicles as contract stars such as Bette Davis and Katharine Hepburn were. Retrospective accounts of Stanwyck's career also highlight her versatility. This demonstrates its importance as part of her image. In a 1981 Film Comment article Stephen Harvey writes that Stanwyck "may have created a body of performances of greater complexity than any of her peers [. . .]" (35). Similarly, James McCourt notes that

Stanwyck was “a performer who, alone of her generation, *could play it all*--could triumph in melodrama, high comedy, slapstick, and film noir [. . .]” (47).

Being able to “please everybody” with her films meant that Stanwyck and her agent had a strong bargaining tool in contract negotiations and could increase Stanwyck’s employability (see chapter two). Good reviews and top grossing films proved that Stanwyck was popular and could thus be used as a form of capital by studios that signed her. Stanwyck’s versatility paid off in 1944 when the US Treasury Department announced that she was the highest paid woman in motion pictures, with an annual salary of \$323,333. Davis came second with \$241,083 and Joan Crawford was much lower on the list with an annual salary of “only” \$144,556.¹¹ Because Stanwyck, as a freelancer, was paid per film, her income increased with the number of films she made. Contract stars had a set annual salary and their income did not increase with the number of features they made. Stanwyck’s popularity and versatility in the 1940s therefore benefitted her in the labour market.

Unlike fan magazines, very few studios promoted Stanwyck as versatile. Paramount publicity stories in the Jack Hirshberg papers at the Margaret Herrick Library are some of the few promotional materials that refer to Stanwyck’s versatility. Articles for No Man of Her Own mentioned that Stanwyck “could claim unquestionable right to the title of Hollywood’s busiest actress,” because “she is known to play anything from tragedy to comedy.” Similarly, promotional materials for Double Indemnity stated that “[i]n a contest for the most versatile feminine star in film today [1944], the three finalists would almost certainly be Ingrid Bergman, Barbara Stanwyck, and Ginger Rogers.”¹² A story in the press book for The Great Man’s Lady (also a Paramount production) noted that few actresses “in screen history have had the variety of roles that [Stanwyck] has had.” A possible explanation why studios did not promote Stanwyck as versatile, whereas the press did, could be that Stanwyck was only signed to a one-picture contract where the studio’s concern was not to build the star, but simply to promote the film she was signed for (see chapter two). During the 1940s, Stanwyck often performed in Warner Bros. and Paramount films (see appendices A and C). Her films for Warner Bros. were usually either women’s pictures or dramas. The studio had no reason to promote Stanwyck as versatile, as the scope of her roles was limited. Stanwyck’s films for Paramount, however, were diverse, ranging from Westerns to comedies to crime thrillers to dramas. Paramount could therefore use Stanwyck’s versatility in its promotions. Warner Bros. used Stanwyck’s image in particular narratives to provide a continuation of Stanwyck’s image. Paramount, on the other hand, also used off-casting and thus diversified the traits of Stanwyck’s image, but the films still evoked expectations associated with Stanwyck, such as a tough, independent heroine.

Stanwyck's radio performances

Stanwyck not only played various roles in films, she also broadened her appeal beyond film by appearing on radio. She often performed on the very popular Lux Radio Theatre. The Lux Radio Theatre was sponsored by Lux Soap and featured 60-minute movie adaptations. Most shows served as advertisement for the film and were broadcast immediately after the film's first run (Becker 190). Because the show was very popular, it attracted big Hollywood names for its performances. The shows ended with short interviews with the stars and this gave the audience the opportunity to "listen in on an informal, out of character chat among [. . .] director and stars" (Hilmes 69). Between 1936 and 1943, Stanwyck performed sixteen times on the show, more than any other actress, and she became one of the few "Lux regulars" besides Fred MacMurray, Claudette Colbert, and Don Ameche.¹³ Many of the shows in which Stanwyck appeared were adaptations of her own films such as "Sorry, Wrong Number," "The Lady Eve," and "Remember the Night," but more important, the Lux Radio Theatre gave Stanwyck the opportunity to appear in different adaptations. These included "Smilin' Through," "Wuthering Heights," and "This Above All." During the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s Stanwyck often performed on similar radio shows such as the Screen Director's Playhouse, and she also played "herself" on the Jack Benny Program and hosted episodes of the Command Performance variety programme. Stanwyck's low, husky voice was well-suited for radio. According to Amy Lawrence, sound media always had a "cultural distaste" for women's voices (29). A baritone voice was seen as the ideal radio voice and women's voices were often seen as "flat or shrill, and they [were] usually pitched too high to be modulated correctly" (29). Women with low voices were better suited for radio work than women with higher voices, not in the least because the lower voice might be associated with power and authority (McKay 188, 200). Stanwyck's voice was naturally low but also soft and well-modulated (as was Claudette Colbert's) which were key aspects that made the female voice suitable for recording (McKay 187). The combination of Stanwyck's New York accent and low voice became a distinctive trademark for both film and radio.

Stanwyck's versatility made her an all-round star which benefitted her as a freelancer. The themes that made up Stanwyck's star image (acting, natural, and undomestic) in the 1930s were still present in the 1940s, albeit in a different combination. I argue that Stanwyck's versatility was based on her acting ability, and that the emphasis in her image on her career facilitated the publicity of this versatility. Acting was therefore foregrounded, and so was Stanwyck's inability to submit to domesticity because her career took precedence over her family life in her image (i.e. the press hardly mentioned Stanwyck's son Dion after the late 1930s).

Women and World War II

World War II brought great changes to American culture and society that challenged traditional gender roles and domestic norms. Many scholars argue that the years 1940 and 1941 marked “the onset of a crucial decade in the history of American womanhood” (Walsh 1; K. Anderson 3). This is most evident from the number of women who went to work. Women’s share of the total labour force increased from 29% in 1941 to 37% in 1944 (Rupp 78). In the period before the outbreak of the war the dominant image of woman depicted a middle-class woman as a traditional wife and mother (see chapter one). World War II provoked a modification of woman’s position both inside and outside the home. Many men went to war and left their civilian jobs and these jobs were filled by the women who were left behind. Women now had the chance to earn an income and enter (new) employment fields. Media campaigns to mobilize women to join the labour force were targeted at housewives and others who would not normally work outside the home (Walsh 2). The war and the shortage of labour created an ideological climate that supported women who worked outside the home, with the need for female labour legitimizing the notion of women as workers. Much of the mobilization propaganda focused on the housewife-turned-factory-worker, although most women actually found jobs outside the factory (Rupp 143). Women had been working in factories before (although these were often women from a working-class or ethnic background), but their presence here was never highlighted as much as it was during the war (143). During the war the idealized image of woman was a woman who worked temporarily in a factory, in a job that was previously designated as male, but who still retained her femininity outside her working hours. For women, the pressure of expectations was high. They were supposed to take on male roles but also to continue what they had been doing before the mobilization (often housekeeping).

At the end of the war, media and government propaganda encouraged women to go back to the home and take care of their returning husbands, brothers, and sons, to help them adjust to civilian life (Hartman 169). By stressing the “importance of traditional femininity,” women were encouraged to fall back into their traditional roles (Walsh 76). After the war, the female labour force rapidly declined and images of working women became scarcer. Working women, and especially working mothers, were often depicted as “neglecting families” and/or “emasculating husbands” (Walsh 76). However, in certain labour fields such as the service sector, women’s work experience justified their employment. Susan Hartman argues that femininity and employment could go hand in hand if the employment fitted the dominant ideology of womanhood, i.e. if women worked in “female” jobs such as sales girl or secretary (16).

In the period leading up to and during mobilization, the marriage rate in the US increased tremendously--from 10.5 per 1,000 population in 1939 to 13.0 per 1,000 population in 1943 (Pavalko and Elder 1215). The marriages in the early 1940s represented weddings postponed during the Depression years, as well as hasty weddings influenced by the war (K. Anderson 76). The film Government Girl (d. Dudley Nichols, US, 1944) exemplifies this, when May (Anne Shirley) marries Joe (James Dunn) before he goes overseas the next day in a swift wedding in a hotel lobby. Karen Anderson notes that young women were aware of the shortage of marriageable men and followed the unofficial motto “get your man while you can” (77).¹⁴ The hasty marriages of the early 1940s contributed to a higher divorce rate in the post-war years, especially in 1946 when a record number of 600,000 divorces were granted (Hartman 165).

Due to wartime mobilization, living conditions also changed. Families were often separated and women were left to provide for the family. Such changes challenged the institution of the family and disorganized the traditional family structure. As a result of the fast emerging mobilization of homemakers there were inadequate and insufficient facilities for childcare (Rupp 138). In combination with childcare problems women’s participation in the labour force often provoked disapproval of mothers working outside the home. Criticism was directed to problems in young children’s development, juvenile delinquency, and teenage prostitution (Polenberg 147-150). This created a conflict between, on the one hand, official encouragement of women as workers, and, on the other hand, social disapproval of mothers as workers.

Many women and children followed their men around the US and moved to war-boom areas such as Washington D.C., Los Angeles, and San Francisco where more work was available for them (Polenberg 199).¹⁵ The cities, however, became overcrowded and housing shortage became a major problem during the war. To relieve the housing shortage new homes were built, many of them in the suburbs of the large cities. In the late 1940s, large-scale, prefabricated housing attracted working- and lower-class families to suburbia (Hartman 167). This migration was one of the factors that played a role in the demise of the studio system era (see chapter four).

Stanwyck and the war effort

Little has been written about stars’ use of their image to contribute to the war effort. During the war many (female) stars used their star power to aid the war. The function of Hollywood stars as role models was very important because they had to disseminate correct values in these difficult times. The pressure on female stars was high because they influenced

the many communities of women. Their fame was used as ideological profiling, demonstrating how women were expected to behave themselves and what they were expected to do. Whether working at the Hollywood Canteen--washing dishes, serving food, dancing with servicemen--as well as entertaining troops stationed abroad, volunteering for war organizations, selling war bonds, or performing in morale-boosting films, stars demonstrated their commitment to the larger cause. Stars' contributions to the war effort showed fans that everybody could do something to help the war--whether taking a job outside the home or rolling bandages for the Red Cross. Self-conscious of female models in times of emergency, women could take tips from female stars to look feminine or become inspired to take a job or do voluntary work.

Olivia de Havilland is one star whose contributions to the war effort were highly publicized. Between 1939 and 1945, de Havilland featured in five films that dealt explicitly with the (upcoming) war.¹⁶ The press book for *In This Our Life* (d. John Huston, US, 1942) promoted de Havilland's contributions, and the Olivia de Havilland scrapbooks in the Constance McCormick Collection give numerous examples of the various ways in which the actress was engaged with the war, including articles and photos that showed de Havilland working at the Hollywood Canteen, selling bonds, volunteering for the Red Cross, and performing at USO camp shows.¹⁷

Compared to de Havilland, Stanwyck's publicized contributions to the war effort seem rather sparse. Because Stanwyck was freelancing during the war and only had short-term contracts, no studio encouraged her to aid the war effort and to publicize her efforts. According to a 1943 publicity biography, Stanwyck insisted that her contributions to the larger cause and various charities remained unpublished.¹⁸ The few articles and photos that illustrate Stanwyck's dedication to the war effort showed Stanwyck working at the Hollywood Canteen, selling war bonds, and contributing to a number of war and charity organizations such as the Volunteer Army Canteen Service (VACS) and the Red Cross.¹⁹ There are also a few advertisements that showed Stanwyck endorsing a product in a war-related environment (figure 14). According to columnist Louella Parsons, however, Stanwyck's biggest contribution to the war was letting her husband serve in the Navy. Parsons noted that Stanwyck was a "Navy wife--lonesome as the dickens without Lieutenant Taylor."²⁰ Parsons's remark connected Stanwyck to ordinary wartime wives, who experienced similar deprivations.

See Barbara Stanwyck in the Hunt Stromberg Production
"LADY OF BURLESQUE," released through United Artists

Barbara Stanwyck works at Canteen



SHE'S IN THE ARMY NOW! Barbara Stanwyck is a hard-working member of the Volunteer Army Canteen Service (VACS to you). Right now you see her catching a moment's rest—playing gin rummy with the boys. As usual, when she takes time-out to relax, she enjoys a bottle of Royal Crown Cola.



HERE'S WHY: Two years ago Miss Stanwyck took the famous cola taste-test. She says: "I tasted leading colas in paper cups, voted for my favorite. My choice, they told me, was Royal Crown Cola. It has been my choice ever since!"



SCREEN WORK and war work are tough jobs to combine. That's another reason Barbara Stanwyck goes for Royal Crown Cola... it gives her a lift and a fresh start. "When I want a 'quick-up'," she adds, "I go for Royal Crown Cola."

BUY MORE U. S. WAR BONDS AND STAMPS TODAY

Barbara Stanwyck prefers
ROYAL CROWN COLA
Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.
Best by Taste-Test!

Figure 14: Royal Crown Cola advertisement shows Stanwyck working at the VACS (Life 1 February 1943).

Other indirect contributions to the war-effort were Stanwyck's performances in the war-related films such as The Great Man's Lady and Christmas in Connecticut.²¹ As noted earlier, war themes occurred in every genre and this is exemplified by these two films: a Western and a comedy. The films are very different but the analyses of these films demonstrate how they both highlighted women's contributions to the war effort in their own ways, albeit using diverse dominant images of women.

The Great Man's Lady is a historical story and not directly related to the war, but it carries wartime resonances. The film is a female oriented Western--a Western in which the protagonist is not male but female--and as such more attractive to wartime female audiences. The Great Man's Lady can be read as morale boost and a model for women at home, by tracing the life of a headstrong woman who sacrifices everything she has for her husband and country. The film's prologue suggests that women can help their men by serving "in the background":

Meeting Hannah Hoyt, the great man's lady, would not be so important if there were only one Hannah Hoyt; but, fortunately, the miracle of a Hannah Hoyt happens again and again, from generation to generation of American womanhood. Not only behind great men, but behind the ordinary guy--you will meet a Hannah Hoyt. In her own small way, she will be helping, pointing the road ahead, encouraging her man to reach his own pinnacle of success.

The Great Man's Lady's heroine is 109-year-old Hannah Hoyt. Through flashbacks she tells her story, which opens in 1848 when fifteen-year-old Hannah elopes with Ethan Hoyt (Joel McCrea) to make his dream to build a big city in his western prairie land come true. Ethan, with the help, courage, and self-sacrifice of Hannah, becomes a great man. She, however, lives apart from him, unknown to the world. Hannah is a many-sided character: she is a romantic, young girl; a resourceful pioneer bride; a determined defender of her husband's interests, and a woman stripped of her husband and children. In her book Starring Miss Barbara Stanwyck, author Ella Smith defines Hannah as "a lady. But she is a flesh and blood one. She is capable of learning skills that will help her husband, enduring hardships [. . .], adhering to what she believes in and giving up whatever she must in order to provide him [Ethan] with what he needs" (151). The Great Man's Lady is similar to the war-related film Since You Went Away (d. John Cromwell, US, 1944), in suggesting that women serve the nation by serving men. Unlike the women in Since You Went Away, Hannah does not adhere to traditional domestic roles. To survive she provides for herself by setting up a boarding establishment and by working in a gambling house. In this sense, The Great Man's Lady is similar to Tender Comrade (d. Edward Dmytryk, US, 1944) where women blend traditional devotion to men with images of female independence (Doherty, Projections 156).

For those who were left behind by their fathers, husbands, or boyfriends, The Great Man's Lady might have provided some form of comfort; that while the men were away and fighting actively, the women could stay at home and still fulfil their patriotic duty by serving in their men's shadows. While Hannah is a very independent woman, she is also subordinate to her man. She is defined in terms of her dedication to her husband. The film thus argued that no matter what opportunities opened up during the war, a woman was supposed to stay behind her man. It implies that there was a clear limit to what women could expect from their apparent new social mobility, highlighting the contradictory images of women during the war.

The second film I discuss is Christmas in Connecticut, which considers domesticity as a performance. During the war, women were expected to help their country as well as care for their house and family. The film uses problems that women encountered during the war, such as traditional family life and childcare, and examines the boundaries of domesticity by turning it into a fiction. Christmas in Connecticut allows a more subversive examination of homemaking because it is a comedy.²² Famous food writer Elizabeth Lane (Stanwyck) writes about herself as a hardworking housewife and an excellent chef with an idyllic farm in Connecticut, but in reality she is a single New Yorker who cannot cook (figure 15). Her boss (Sydney Greenstreet) decides that war hero Jeff (Dennis Morgan) is to spend a traditional Christmas with Elizabeth's family on her farm. Her career will be over if her boss finds out she has been deceiving her readers, so undomestic Elizabeth needs to make the domestic deception believable. The film indicates a return to pre-war gender roles: the woman as housewife, the man as breadwinner and head of the family. Yet the film also suggests that these ideals are outdated and unattainable. The ideal has been created but it cannot keep when it is brought into practice.

Jeff's visit is supposed to re-acquaint him with civilian life in a soon to be demobilised world because he is "afraid of marriage and domesticity" (Christmas in Connecticut). However, he is more at home at Elizabeth's idealised farm than she is: Jeff washes dishes, bathes the baby, and changes nappies. Elizabeth, on the other hand, does not know how to cook (she gets her recipes from her friend Felix [S.Z. Skall]) or how to care for a baby. Stanwyck's "undomestic" off-screen image was used to substantiate her character. During the war the press foregrounded Stanwyck's full work schedule rather than her domestic life. Fan magazine Movieland called Stanwyck an "all-work-and-no-play girl" (Shallin 57). Similarly, before she married Taylor, publicity about Stanwyck also focused on her career and independence (see chapter one) which fitted Elizabeth's character.



Figure 15: Elizabeth's voice-over in Warner Bros.' Christmas in Connecticut emphasises the discrepancy between her fictional (narrated) and her real life: "From my living room window, as I write, I can look out across the broad front lawns [. . .]."

It might be expected that Elizabeth changes after her experience with Jeff, that she is no longer “a white-collar girl, a typical American business girl, who might step out of an advertising office or department store,” but transforms to the beacon of domesticity that she pretended to be.²³ However, Elizabeth leaves her traditional, controlling suitor John Sloan (Reginald Gardiner) for Jeff, who knows his way around the house and can happily take over Elizabeth’s domestic tasks. They become the new post-war couple making a new start. The film shows that the ideal of perfect domesticity is a fiction, and that domestic necessities can be taken care of in less idealistic settings.

Images of Women in Stanwyck’s Films: Wartime Production Trends

I will consider questions of representation raised by Stanwyck’s various roles and examine the gendered social meanings conveyed by and through Stanwyck’s roles. There existed a great complexity of roles that US women were to play or were to be during the war, and therefore I believe it necessary to pay particular attention to the profiling of women in Stanwyck’s films. Stanwyck’s versatility was similar to the versatility of women’s roles in US society. I focus on Stanwyck’s roles in three popular wartime cycles--the women’s picture, the crime thriller, and the female gothic film--because they showed alternative roles for women and for Stanwyck as a star.

The war had a major influence on the Hollywood film industry. Financially, the industry thrived during this period. The profits of the biggest eight studios--Paramount, MGM, Warner Bros., RKO, Twentieth Century-Fox, Universal, Columbia, and United Artists--surged from \$20 million in 1940 to \$60 million in 1945 (Schatz, Genius 298). However, film output decreased because of manpower shortage and restricted supplies of film stock (Bordwell 471). Major studios therefore concentrated on producing fewer but more expensive films. The domestic market increased because consumers had more money to spend but nowhere else to spend it. During the war and post-war eras, film output changed to accommodate changes in society. There was a particular increase of espionage thrillers and combat dramas (Jewell 217, 219-220). The number of musicals, women’s pictures, and female gothic films also increased (Jewell 238-243; Hanson 8-9). In many films, the individual protagonist was replaced by the collective, whether a combat unit or a group of working women, to support the commitment to the larger cause. According to Thomas Schatz the relationship between cinema and social conditions had never been as direct as during the wartime period (Boom 206). The New York Times noted a change in women’s roles that paralleled the changing images of women in US society. Film critic Bosley Crowther argued that “some of the most feminine of screen ladies have been compelled [. . .] to submit to terrific kickings about [. . .] but also to respond with their fair share of rights and left hooks to the jaw” (“Females” 155). Similarly, Picturegoer pointed out that “the

war is remodelling feminine characteristics,” and that female characters were tougher than before, which was, according to the article, particularly shown by Jean Arthur, Katharine Hepburn, and Stanwyck. However, the article noted a simultaneous rise in “purely feminine” characters played by stars such as Claudette Colbert, Miriam Hopkins, and Paulette Goddard (Mooring 11-12). This demonstrates the contradictory images of women during the wartime period. Stanwyck performed in nearly all popular genres and cycles during the war, except the musical and the combat film.²⁴

Women’s picture

Many scholars argue that the 1930s and 1940s represented the heyday of the women’s picture (Haskell 154; Walsh 23; Doane, “Woman’s Film” 68). The women’s picture is broadly defined as a film that centres on a woman, or deals with a woman’s (emotional) experiences, and is aimed at a largely female audience (Walsh 23; Doane, “Woman’s Film” 68). Women’s picture is an umbrella term and encompasses various genres. For example, Stanwyck often crossed between comedy, drama, crime thrillers, and gothic films that all centred on a woman’s world and as such can be defined as women’s pictures.

The popularity of the women’s picture in the 1940s can be explained from multiple perspectives. During the war, women made up the majority of the filmgoing audience (Hartman 191; Handel 90). With many men in the film industry (stars, directors, writers, etc.) drafted into the armed forces, studios lacked male stars and roles, and thus had to provide good roles for the female stars that were available, which created an influx of woman-centred films (“Femmes on Spot” 3). Female writers who replaced male writers were, according to Paramount head of production B.P. Schulberg, “better able to cater for the tastes of a female audience [. . .]” (Franke 34). Similarly, Catherine Turney (writer for MGM and Warner Bros.) believed that “women could bring more authentic dimension to [. . .] [women’s] stories” (Franke 47). The story models of popular women’s pictures centred on the middle-class and crucially focused on the centrality of domestic life or the (im) possibility of combining domesticity with a career. To illustrate, I will examine a Stanwyck film that is a typical women’s picture; My Reputation--produced in 1944 but released in 1946--which deals directly with the war’s impact on women. Promotional materials demonstrate the film’s appeal to female audiences. For example, the film offered a “Special Ladies’ Preview” to “stir up advance excitement.” With this preview, the studio attempted to attract “women’s page editors, women’s problem advisors, and prominent local business and career women” (My Reputation press book). My Reputation is one of a few films made in the 1940s where Stanwyck does not play a lower-class character. The film concentrates on three topics: a woman’s desire, her duty, and the pressures of the (female) community. This is a particular framework that is sharpened by the war. World War II

represents confusion about moral order, about what women were supposed to do, as well as psychological pressures. My Reputation uses melodrama as a way of scripting behaviour in times of confusion.

During the war, loneliness was a common “problem” amongst GI sweethearts and wives, with fathers, husbands, and boyfriends leaving for a prolonged period of time (Walsh 69). My Reputation recalls Stanwyck’s image as a “war wife” although this is never referred to directly in publicity materials because the film was released after the war and by that time Stanwyck and Taylor had been reunited. Widowhood was also familiar for audiences in the mid-1940s, with many men not returning from active duty. Although parenthood could relieve the feeling of loneliness, this could not replace the feeling of missing a husband or lover (Walsh 69). My Reputation focuses on a widowed woman, Jessica Drummond (Stanwyck), and her struggles with the duty she has towards her deceased husband and family, and her desire for a another man, Major Landis (George Brent). Central to the film are the social expectations of a community towards the widowed Jessica who defies these expectations by following her own feelings. For example, Jessica’s mother (Lucile Watson) insists that as a widow Jessica should wear black, which Jessica refuses. Likewise, the society’s upper-class gossips about Jessica’s relationship with Landis and her refusal to mourn her husband in public. Unaccustomed to make her own decisions, Jessica has to learn to live her own life. She needs to be liberated from her confining (upper-) class and gender boundaries by a man (Landis) to find love. The film’s tagline underscores this: “A woman isn’t meant to be lonely, she’s meant to be loved. From now on I’m going to live my life my way” (figure 16). This accurately sums up the film’s theme of duty versus desire. Like, for example, Now, Voyager (d. Irving Rapper, US, 1942) and All That Heaven Allows (d. Douglas Sirk, US, 1956), My Reputation showed how the desiring self could be trapped by expectations of society, and in particular by female communities. The all-female community was a particular wartime phenomenon that developed because so many men were away on duty (Walsh 65). Members of these female groups could support each other, but, as the film shows, female gossip could also exclude and expel women from certain societal places. In accordance with government campaigns, My Reputation ends with the suggestion of family happiness as Jessica stays at home with her children--waiting until Major Landis returns from active duty--looking forward to a post-war future.



Figure 16: Advertisement for Warner Bros.' My Reputation, focusing on a woman's independence and desires.

Crime thriller

Stanwyck said she was frightened when director Billy Wilder offered her the part of Phyllis Dietrichson in Double Indemnity because she had never played such an “out and out killer” (AFI 48). Colleagues advised her that it would “ruin [her] career to play a cold-blooded murderess.”²⁵ Nonetheless, Stanwyck’s roles in crime thrillers such as Double Indemnity and The Strange Love of Martha Ivers played an important part in her portfolio during this period. Double Indemnity was Stanwyck’s first adult crime thriller and as such made a distinct change in her image. I consider this film and The Strange Love of Martha Ivers because the latter’s producer Hal Wallis produced “psychologically-grounded” crime thrillers that differed from crime films such as Double Indemnity. Both films were part of a cycle that showed the “bleaker side of American experience during (and after) World War II” (Schatz, Boom 205). In many studies, the crime thriller is explicitly or implicitly regarded as a reflection of various social and cultural changes in the US in the 1940s (Krutnik, Lonely 56).

In Double Indemnity Stanwyck reprised her 1930s bad girl roles, but unlike these early roles, her character Phyllis is not provided with reasons for being mercenary and as such becomes an abstract embodiment of evil impulses of American capital society. She plans to kill not out of self-defence, as Stanwyck’s previous characters had done, but only to get money.²⁶ Phyllis’s characterization is visible through her costuming, for example through Stanwyck’s blond wig that points to Phyllis’s artifice. Her overt sexualisation is suggested, amongst other things, by her first entrance where she is dressed in nothing but a bathing towel (cover illustration). Because of its content, the film was promoted as being “for grown-ups only” and a “hard hitting” film.²⁷ According to the Hollywood-Citizen News, Stanwyck remarked after seeing the film that she was “afraid to go with her [Phyllis]. She’s such a b--” (sic).²⁸ Phyllis is very unsympathetic and therefore not a role that any actress would easily accept. An article in the Los Angeles Examiner noted that it took “a lot of courage for an actress to tackle the role of a murderess, especially with no begging for sympathy” and that “this job calls for an actress-- and one with plenty of courage.”²⁹ According to an article in The Photoplayer in 1948, Stanwyck “has so often been synonymous with roles of a violent nature.” Fans would not be able to identify with a star who only played unsympathetic characters, but Stanwyck’s “undiminished popularity” in “violent” roles (i.e. in Double Indemnity, The Strange Love of Martha Ivers, and The File on Thelma Jordon) seemed to be “stimulating rather than jeopardizing her career.”³⁰

Double Indemnity was part of a cycle of crime thrillers that was popular from the mid-1940s until the late 1950s. It was an influential film that tackled highly sexual matters, and it also profiled Stanwyck as a femme fatale. The film tells the story of insurance salesman Walter

Neff (Fred MacMurray) who is lured into murder by Phyllis Dietrichson (Stanwyck) so that she can get her husband's life insurance money. Nowadays, the film is often cited as one of the most important and well-known films noirs (Naremore, More 9). The film noir phenomenon, as Frank Krutnik calls it, developed during and after the war, but the term was not in widespread use until the 1970s (Krutnik, Lonely ix; Naremore, More 10). A film noir story often centred on a cynical, hard-boiled, disillusioned male protagonist who encountered a seductive, subversive, promiscuous woman: the so-called femme fatale. According to Christine Gledhill, these femme fatales "work on the fringes of the underworld and are defined by the male criminal ambience of the thriller" (28). However, as Steve Neale argues, these strong and subversive women were by no means new or restricted to crime thrillers (Genres 163). Femmes fatales have been scrutinized regarding disrupted gender roles during and after the war. Many academics argue that the emergence of femmes fatales at this point in time "coincided with female acquisition of economic and social power in life," and that these films might have signified "that women were finally a threat to the status quo" (Rosen 224; Gledhill 25).³¹

In the 1940s, Stanwyck played three "out and out killers": Phyllis Dietrichson in Double Indemnity, Martha Ivers in The Strange Love of Martha Ivers, and Thelma Jordon in The File on Thelma Jordon. Nonetheless, these three women differ from one another. On the one hand, there is the woman who is trapped (Martha and Thelma) and on the other hand there is the woman who traps (Phyllis). Phyllis is an unsympathetic and cold-blooded murderess who successfully traps a man to help her. Martha and Thelma also both use men to fulfil their greedy needs (for power and money), but they are more sympathetic because they are trapped in lives that they want to flee, and both show remorse at the end of the films and kill themselves.

In The Strange Love of Martha Ivers Stanwyck plays Martha Ivers, a domineering woman and the power behind the town of Iverstown, whose impulsive, murderous rage led to her aunt's death many years before. Martha has since married a witness, Walter (Kirk Douglas), to keep him quiet. When another possible witness, Sam (Van Heflin), visits Martha she tries to kill him, but remorse turns her and Walter to suicide. The film's producer, Hal Wallis, specialized in producing "melodramatic films with strong characters and situations, films that proved extremely popular" (Wallis and Higham 118). Wallis's films dealt with "the psychology of murders" and showed "how frustration, poverty, and a desperate need for money could drive people to psychotic extremes [. . .]" (118). This accounts for the difference between Phyllis and Martha. Phyllis's only motives for murder are greed and anger at her husband, whereas Martha is driven by ruthless ambition which stems from childhood bullying by her aunt. She was trapped under her aunt's tyranny and then in a hopeless marriage to Walter, an unambitious dipsomaniac. By showing Martha's past, the film puts the character's behaviour in a context.

Both The Strange Love of Martha Ivers and The File on Thelma Jordon (also produced by Hal Wallis) have female names in the title, showcasing their leading female star (Stanwyck). The female names in the titles also suggest the films' attraction for women by concentrating on female characters. Most crime thrillers featured a male investigator and hardly allowed a female perspective. In The Strange Love of Martha Ivers and The File on Thelma Jordon, the protagonists are female and the audience is more knowledgeable about them than the other characters are. In Double Indemnity, audience knowledge about Phyllis is restricted to what Neff knows. The Strange Love of Martha Ivers and The File on Thelma Jordon seem to be aimed at women because they were not as "ruthless" as other crime thrillers and provided more psychological and emotional background. Like all femmes fatales, Phyllis, Martha and Thelma are punished because crime could not be celebrated according to the PCA. None of the women get what they want: they are punished with death for their transgression of gender and patriarchal boundaries.

Female gothic film

Stanwyck's performances in female gothic films are almost forgotten today, but the cycle was very popular with female audiences in the late 1940s. According to Helen Hanson this was because the stories and screenplays were often written by women, centred on a female character and her experiences, and featured female stars as protagonists (xvi). The female gothic is a hybridized cycle--a combination of crime and melodrama--and has its predecessors in the gothic novels from the eighteenth century. The most well-known female gothic films (featuring for example Joan Fontaine, Gene Tierney, and Ingrid Bergman) include Rebecca (d. Alfred Hitchcock, US, 1940), Suspicion (d. Alfred Hitchcock, US, 1941), Dragonwyck (d. Joseph L. Mankiewicz, US, 1946), and Gaslight (d. George Cukor, US, 1944).³² The films avoided dealing directly with the war, but dealt with wartime implications such as hasty marriages and psychologically-scarred men. I will examine the female gothic film in general and Stanwyck's The Two Mrs. Carrolls (d. Peter Godfrey, US, 1947) and Cry Wolf (d. Peter Godfrey, US, 1947) in particular. Stanwyck performed in three female gothic films, but since I already discussed Sorry, Wrong Number in the previous chapter, I will concentrate on the other two films here.

The war had thrown the lives of women off-balance and the fears and anxieties that women encountered as a result were played out in the female gothic film. Tania Modleski and Diane Waldman suggest that the cycle was popular because it reflected women's anxieties concerning domesticity that became especially evident towards the end of the war, when women were forced back into their homes after the men returned from the war (Modleski 21-22; Waldman 38-40). Andrea Walsh argues that women feared for a changed husband or lover, and for infidelity and desertion (73). She notes that the war "provided fertile ground for the 'culture

of distrust,” especially in love and family relationships (168). Molly Haskell notes that the male-female relationships in the female gothic film were out of balance because they were “rooted in fear and suspicion” (195-196). The heroine’s paranoia is usually invoked by her fear for a male--often her husband (Hanson xvi). The narratives of the female gothic films reveal the past slowly to the heroine and highlight ambiguity and suspense: are the heroine’s fears imagined or real? Narratives are often characterized by restrictions in knowledge for both characters and audience. The heroine of a female gothic film is usually an investigative woman who has to become knowledgeable about events in the past that might influence her destiny. Doane argues that in the gothic film “there is a concerted effort to locate [the woman] as the subject of the knowledge.” This indicates that the woman is not the object of the gaze, as Mulvey argued in “Visual Pleasures,” but the “agent of the gaze” (*Desire* 134). The heroine is often trapped in a house, or a man is concealing a secret somewhere in the home where the heroine is not allowed (a laboratory in *Cry Wolf* and an artist’s studio in *The Two Mrs. Carrolls*). The home therefore becomes a place of threat, and these films provided a counter-current to women’s duty of keeping home. Finally, Mary Ann Doane argues that the violence in the gothic films is rationalized “as the effect of an overly hasty marriage” (“Woman’s Film” 69). Suspicions about the past and about conspiracies are therefore recurrent in the female gothic cycle.

Both *The Two Mrs. Carrolls* and *Cry Wolf* deal with wartime anxieties. In *The Two Mrs. Carrolls*, Sally (Stanwyck) falls in love with struggling artist Geoffrey Carroll (Humphrey Bogart). After their marriage, Sally hears rumours that Geoffrey killed his first wife after painting her as a portrait called Angel of Death. When Sally discovers that Geoffrey has a painting of her as the Angel of Death hidden in his studio, she fears that history will repeat itself and tries to prevent this. Like many women in the audience at the time, after a hasty marriage Sally wonders why her husband excludes her from his life and she is unaware of his past life. In *Cry Wolf* Stanwyck plays Sandra Demarest who visits the Cadwell estate and announces to Mark Demarest (Errol Flynn) that she is secretly married to his nephew James who recently died. While staying at the estate, James’s younger sister Julie (Geraldine Brooks) confides in Sandra that she hears strange noises and screams in the house at night. Sandra suspects Mark is lying, that James is not dead, and goes to investigate. This suggests another wartime anxiety: Sandra doubts whether her husband is dead and later why he is hiding. Both protagonists are desperate to find out what the important men in their life are hiding from them. Unlike the bedridden Leona Stevenson in *Sorry, Wrong Number*, Stanwyck’s characters in *The Two Mrs. Carrolls* and *Cry Wolf*, are active, tough, and determined to find out what is going on. Sandra is a more physically active heroine compared to Sally and many other female gothic heroines. She

often goes horseback riding, scrambles over rooftops, and to gain access to a secret laboratory she hoists herself up in a dumbwaiter. The protagonists' active nature is typical of the cycle, and gave Stanwyck the opportunity to be physically active, which she liked (see chapter five).

The films also indirectly refer to women's dependence on each other in wartime. Sally and Sandra only confide in other women: Sally trusts Geoffrey's little daughter Bea (Ann Carter), and Sandra trusts Julie. Both these women are younger and part of the suspicious men's family and as such have been involved with the men for a longer time than the heroines. Sally and Sandra therefore have access to crucial information that helps them in their exploration. These younger women are the catalysts for the heroines' search because they inform the heroines that something is wrong in the home. The films thus emphasize the importance of shared female experiences. Women in the audience encountered the various different models of womanhood that Stanwyck (and other female stars) offered during the difficult 1940s. Although, as I demonstrated, there were many contradictory images of women in this period, women were always encouraged to be feminine.

Films and Femininity

According to a 1944 article in trade magazine Variety, female stars of Stanwyck's generation were getting "old," but because of the high demand for "top older" female stars in this period these stars could ask up to \$250,000 per film ("Femme Star" 1). The article identified Bette Davis, Ann Sheridan, Olivia de Havilland, Claudette Colbert, Katharine Hepburn, and Hedy Lamarr as "top older" contract stars, and Stanwyck as the "most important [older] femme star on the freelance list" ("Femme Star" 55). During the second half of 1940s this cohort of "older" female stars was followed by a younger generation of actresses who achieved stardom in the 1940s such as Lauren Bacall, Veronica Lake, and Lizabeth Scott. Walsh notes that the older generation "share[d] an aura of strength, perseverance, and verbal facility," and that few of their films had "pin-up shots" that were often included in films of the younger stars--with the exception of Stanwyck's films Ball of Fire and Lady of Burlesque (28). In an article in Variety in 1943, a seller of "cheesecake" and "leg art" pictures noted that Stanwyck was one of the "bigger sellers today" ("Cheesecake Pix" 55). The article detailed that cheesecake pictures were in high demand from servicemen, and that "leg art in the form of Barbara Stanwyck, who via her last two pictures Ball of Fire and Lady of Burlesque, exhibited plenty of same" was selling for 25 cents, whereas "in ordinary times they go for a nickel or a dime" (figure 17) (55). During the war the pin-up co-existed with the image of the working woman. Pin-ups were featured on greeting cards, posters, playing cards, calendars, and even on noses of planes (Buszek 213, 230).



Figure 17a: A cheesecake photo of Stanwyck for United Artists' Lady of Burlesque.



Figure 17b: A cheesecake photo of Stanwyck for Paramount's Double Indemnity. The Los Angeles Times noted that when "Barbara Stanwyck wore this costume in Double Indemnity, the men in the armed forces started whistling at her [. . .]."³³

The most popular pin-up stars were Betty Grable, Rita Hayworth, and Jane Russell (Hartman 199). These young actresses posed in enticing positions that suggested sexuality, showing an all-American femininity (May, "Rosie" 140). Their sexuality was different from the sexuality older stars displayed. Walsh argues that the mature actresses expressed "strong sensuality" and their projected sexuality was "more controlled and self-directed than the more tawdry or sultry appeal of a Rita Hayworth or Betty Grable" (28).³⁴ Whereas the younger actresses showed a sexuality that attracted men, the older actresses more knowingly displayed their sensuality through wit and intelligence. Nonetheless, both generations' cheesecakes were in high demand during the war.

In his article "The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window," Charles Eckert argues that Hollywood films provided "living display windows [. . .]; windows that were occupied by marvellous mannequins and swathed in a fetish-inducing ambiance of music and emotion" (35). Actresses often modelled fashion, and women's pictures in particular were a convenient vehicle to display fashion. During the war fashion symbolized women's increased freedom and mobility; clothes were simplified and comfortable (Hartman 195). Simplicity was also required because of the scarcity of materials. Women spent more money during the war on fashion and beauty than before, simply because they had more money and because the government actively promoted the idea that women should be feminine and glamorous (Renov 19). Michael Renov states that during the war "a woman's hairstyle was a signifier of her social position and an indication of her desire for glamour" (20). Hairstyles became more complicated as long curls became the fashion rather than a short bob. Haskell also emphasizes the use of long hair in 1940s "dark melodramas," and argues that for women, long hair was "the equivalent of a gun [. . .]" as if the woman was using her sexuality for malicious purposes (189-191).

Moreover, for women who worked in the factories long hair became a safety hazard and women were warned not to copy Veronica Lake's popular peek-a-boo hairstyle as the long fringe was a safety hazard ("If You Are" 17). Working women were advised to wear hats or bandanas to cover their hair, but they were not directly urged to cut it. Women were not simply encouraged to be glamorous, but, as I noted earlier, they were also expected to fulfil other roles as worker and homemaker. There was a tension between fashion (long curls) and duty (hiding the long curls). At the end of the war women's hair got shorter, possibly because it became a nuisance and hazard when women returned to domestic work. The time-consuming hairdos were no longer practical. This change from glamorous in the early years to practical in the later years is also visible in Stanwyck's image (figure 18). Arguably unexpected, since Stanwyck had been associated with natural in the 1930s, Stanwyck suddenly became fashionable and glamorous in the early war years.



Figure 18: A portrait of Stanwyck from 1944 (left) with long hair and a portrait of Stanwyck from around 1949 (right) with a short bob (photographers unknown, author's collection). In an interview in Movieland in 1948, Stanwyck said that she was “one of the first to sport the 17” bob. [MGM designer Irene] said, frankly, I ought to cut my hair [for the film B.F.’s Daughter]. Suddenly I felt more feminine, younger, gayer” (Holland 78).

According to Nigel Thrift's article "The Material Practices of Glamour," glamour is an ideal that can never be completely realized in real life (7). He argues that glamour is something that appears effortless but is highly calculated (similar to a star's image) (15). The Hollywood film industry thrived on this notion of glamour. Glamour is a form of selling that depends on envy and identification and it is usually associated with stardom, wealth, and physical attraction. Stanwyck's 1930s image had been the opposite of glamorous. Her lower-class characters did not require fashionable or glamorous clothes. Although Warner Bros. let prolific costume designer Orry-Kelly design most of her gowns in the 1930s, neither fashion nor glamour was important in Stanwyck's roles or image.³⁵ Unlike many of Joan Crawford's films, for example, Stanwyck's films did not depend on the display of glamorous costumes.

Stanwyck was not a conventional Hollywood beauty and many critics discussed her appeal to both men and women as resulting from her acting skills, her charm, and her down-to-earthness rather than beauty.³⁶ A 1943 article in Picturegoer stated that many stars were more glamorous than Stanwyck, but few had "more histrionic ability" (L.C. 7). Another article in the same magazine noted that Stanwyck had the "virtues of the girl next door, the ordinary, lovable qualities of ordinary, lovely people" (Cole 7). Similarly, an article in Screen Guide suggested Stanwyck could keep "a handsome husband as Bob Taylor" because she was "wise" and "the nicest person in town."³⁷ When Stanwyck married Taylor in 1939, their union became the most important theme in her (off-screen) image (see chapter one), and replaced the previous emphasis on Stanwyck's rags-to-riches life history.³⁸ Like the marriage between, for example, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbank Sr., the union between Taylor and Stanwyck made them an idealized couple and Stanwyck therefore became an idealized version of a wife. According to various magazine articles Taylor showered Stanwyck with "feminine" gifts such as fur coats, necklaces, rings, and brooches.³⁹ The "change" in Stanwyck's image from natural and lower-class to glamorous was suggested by the press in various articles, nearly all of which credited Taylor with the transformation. For example, Warner Bros. costume designer Orry-Kelly noted in an interview with the Los Angeles Examiner that in "the old days [the early 1930s]" Stanwyck did not care what she wore, but that she became more interested in clothes "because she is so happily married to Robert Taylor."⁴⁰ Similarly, an article in The Photoplayer noted that "[p]eople have criticised Stanwyck for her lack of dress sense" but that, when she got married, Stanwyck started "dressing up, thinking it would please her husband."⁴¹ Stanwyck's biography even routinely stated that she "didn't wear jewelry til (sic) she got some from Taylor."⁴² In this sense (although possibly not on purpose), Stanwyck observed wartime government propaganda that women should look beautiful and be feminine for their husbands.



Figure 19a: Starting with Paramount's The Lady Eve, Stanwyck often wore a bolero jacket that emphasized her slim waist. (Costume design by Edith Head).



Figure 19b: In Warner Bros.' Christmas in Connecticut Stanwyck wears a bolero which leaves her waist free and creates the optical illusion that her buttocks are more pertly placed than they are. (Costume design by Edith Head).

The media called The Lady Eve a turning point in Stanwyck's image regarding glamour.⁴³ The film was both Paramount costume designer Edith Head's and Stanwyck's first fashion picture, and it was the biggest transition in Stanwyck's costuming (Head and Calistro 49). According to Eric de Kuiper in his 1985 article about the glamour of Hollywood costumes, the character has to be costumed, but the body of the actor needs to be dressed as well. The actor is not just an actor, but a star. The female star's body is being modelled and manipulated according to her image (21). The clothing of the star and the costumes of her character are based on that image. Head's designs for Stanwyck in The Lady Eve, and in many later films, were thus based on Stanwyck's image. Because The Lady Eve was advertised as "The Sexiest Picture of the Year" Stanwyck's costumes were sexy and fashionable (Head and Calistro 49). As Jean, Stanwyck wears costumes that are either all black, or all white, or black on white. When Jean poses as Lady Eve, her costumes are made of more luxurious fabrics (such as silk) and with subtler colorations. Head dressed Stanwyck's characters and Stanwyck the star by masking any unattractive parts of Stanwyck's body and focusing viewers' attention on her attractive parts. Because Stanwyck's buttocks were rather low, Head designed gowns and skirts that would mask this fact, by drawing more attention to Stanwyck's slim waist (Head and Calistro 49-50). In many of Stanwyck's 1940s films, she wears fashionable bolero jackets that keep her waist free of any visual distractions (figure 19). The article "Barbara gets Beautified" in Picturegoer in 1941 drew particular attention to the changes in Stanwyck's costumes for The Lady Eve, comparing them to the "rough pioneering dress or plain tailored suits, *so often used in typical Stanwyck pictures*" (emphasis added) (W.H.M. 9). According to the article, Stanwyck supposedly said that "all parts calling for plain women stars always seemed to come either to her or to Jean Arthur" (W.H.M. 9).⁴⁴ Stanwyck's association with natural therefore continued play an important part in her onscreen image, while at the same time a glamorous element was added.

I argue that the addition of glamour to Stanwyck's image did not clash with the already existing element of natural, and that glamour did not replace Stanwyck's connotations of natural. It would have been difficult for a freelance star such as Stanwyck to have such a drastic image change from natural to glamorous. Stanwyck did not have a studio behind her that would make major changes to her image (i.e. Crawford's image change at MGM in the late 1920s/early 1930s and at Warner Bros. in the mid-1940s, Davis's change at Warner Bros. in the mid-1930s) and subsequently used influential resources to publicize her new image and adapt her roles to fit this image. Until the late 1940s Stanwyck was under contract to Zeppo Marx's agency. This was a small agency that did not have the vast publicity machinery that studios had, nor did it have as much influence in the industry and this suggests that the agency therefore

could not execute drastic image changes. In the 1940s naturalness continued to prevail in Stanwyck's onscreen image; her characters were still plain women, usually associated with the lower-class. During the first half of the 1940s, elements of glamour and natural co-existed in Stanwyck's image, but when Taylor (the reason why Stanwyck was associated with glamour) entered the Navy in 1943 and publicity about Stanwyck focused solely on her career, the glamorous image faded to the background.⁴⁵ There was less to write about the glamorous couple when they were physically separated, so publicity focused on Stanwyck's career again, which was blooming again because of her versatility. As described in chapter one, female stars had great difficulty balancing their roles as wives and stars. Apparently Stanwyck's glamorization into a wife was not as durable as her star status because from the mid-1940s onward publicity focussed predominantly on her career.

Conclusion

In this chapter I first examined why, particularly in the war and post-war eras, Stanwyck was called versatile. During the wartime period, when film output changed and new, popular genres and cycles were created, Stanwyck performed in many different films. Between 1941 and 1945 her films ranged from comedies to dramas to Westerns to crime thrillers. I demonstrated that Stanwyck was called versatile not simply because she successfully played various roles that fitted her image, but she played so many of them in a short period of time.

I then demonstrated the various (contradictory) images of women that Stanwyck portrayed in this period. Because Stanwyck was versatile and because her image was so pliable that it fitted a variety of roles, she also showed various images of womanhood. The characters that Stanwyck played fitted her image one way or another. For example, class differences remained an important part of Stanwyck's onscreen image. The Lady Eve played out class differences in a (verbal) battle of the sexes where the lower-class heroine catches her upper-class man. In The Great Man's Lady Hannah defied her upper-class life to become a pioneer woman.

Furthermore, I suggested that the most dominant characteristic in Stanwyck's characters was strength. No matter which role or genre, Stanwyck's characters were strong, determined, and independent. Her characters never gave up, always fought their battles alone, and never accepted anything less than what they wanted. They took control over their own lives, made their own decisions, and were usually in control of their husbands/partners/lovers (e.g. The Lady Eve, You Belong to Me, and Double Indemnity). In Stanwyck's gothic films, her characters single-handedly unravelled the mystery. The independence of Stanwyck's characters in the crime thrillers led them to cross patriarchal and gender boundaries. These characters were

also often literally alone with no known or very few relatives. Nearly all Stanwyck's characters needed to resolve class differences and they usually did that on their own. Jessica in My Reputation, for example, defied class boundaries to live her own life. Martha in The Strange Love of Martha Ivers ran the family mill and her dipsomaniacal husband's political career while trying to get rid of the one person who threatened to take her power away. However, these characteristics are by no means restricted to Stanwyck's 1940s roles. They are also prevalent in her 1930s roles (e.g. Baby Face, Illicit, and Ladies They Talk About).

I then revealed why glamour became an important element of Stanwyck's image during the (early) 1940s. Stanwyck was always described as natural and even unglamorous. Various sources suggested that her new glamorous image was created because of Stanwyck's marriage to Taylor. Her newfound off-screen glamorization was also mirrored in some of her onscreen characters. Stanwyck's change from natural to glamorous coincided with government propaganda campaigns that encouraged women to be feminine to please their husbands. Nonetheless, when Taylor joined the Navy and publicity focussed on Stanwyck's career rather than her family life, glamour practically disappeared from her image.

The following chapter considers Stanwyck's star image in the final stages of her film career--the 1950s and early 1960s. I argue that Stanwyck's film career began to fade in the 1950s because of Stanwyck's age and changes in the organization of the Hollywood film industry. Although Stanwyck made "only" twenty feature films between 1950 and 1964 (compared to twenty-six in the 1940s), it was not the number of films that decreased, but rather the films' status. To illustrate, in the second part of the 1950s Stanwyck often performed in B Westerns rather than lavish, high-budget dramas. Film production changed from mass production of a large number of films per year to individual film productions that were created by producers rather than studios. The self-contained studios and their factory-style production disappeared. Changes in film content and audience demographic also influenced Stanwyck's career. Audience diversification led to films produced for certain audience groups such as adults (e.g. Stanwyck's Walk on the Wild Side [d. Edward Dmytryk, US, 1962]) or youths (e.g. Stanwyck's Roustabout [d. John Rich, US, 1964]). Teenage audiences were less interested in veteran stars such as Stanwyck, Davis, and Crawford, but rather in younger stars such as Marlon Brando, Marilyn Monroe, and Elizabeth Taylor ("Quota of 'New Faces'" 71; "Hollywood's 'Age of the Teens'" 3).

Chapter 4

Fading Star, 1950s-1960s

“When Barbara strips off her petticoats and straps on her guns” is the tag line for Stanwyck’s 1954 film Cattle Queen of Montana (d. Allan Dwan, US) and it indicates one of the major shifts that took place in Stanwyck’s career and image in the 1950s and 1960s.¹ Unlike many of the female stars of her generation, Stanwyck “stripped off her petticoats” and extended her film career by performing in numerous B Westerns where strong, female roles were uncommon until the post-war era. Stanwyck’s dominant image as a tough, independent woman was particularly useful in Westerns where Stanwyck’s characters pushed gender boundaries in this traditionally male genre. Stanwyck was one of the few actresses who successfully played strong women that were equal to the male heroes of the genre. The popularity of the Western and her personal interest in the genre enabled Stanwyck to perform in a large number of Westerns. It is for these Western roles that Stanwyck is mostly remembered today.² Although Stanwyck was able to extend her career by performing in B Westerns, many other mature female stars were forced to end their careers in the 1950s because there were insufficient parts for mature women. This was a result of shifts in the Hollywood film industry. Film production changed and teenage audiences, especially, increased, so there was less demand for veteran female film stars. Stanwyck’s maturity, emphasized by her rapidly greying hair, affected the roles she played but also turned Stanwyck into a role model for mature women.

Because Stanwyck was a regular, but, as a woman somewhat unusual, appearance in the Western, much of the publicity surrounding Stanwyck at this time focused on her love for the genre and the quality of her work in these films. The press seemed less interested in Stanwyck’s off-screen private life, particularly after Stanwyck and Taylor divorced in 1950. Since there was not much to write about Stanwyck’s quiet life as a mature, single woman, and because she continued to work when most other female stars of her cohort retired, publicity focused on Stanwyck’s (fading) career. This chapter examines the reasons for Stanwyck’s fading film career in the 1950s and 1960s. The first section of this chapter will outline changes that occurred in the studio system in the late 1940s. I then show how these changes and Stanwyck’s ageing caused her career to wind down in the 1950s. Finally, I conclude the chapter with my investigation of the 1950s Hollywood Western, its place in Stanwyck’s image, and its use of Stanwyck’s image.

The end of the studio system

Returned from the war in 1946, many servicemen married and started families in the suburbs of large cities, far away from the important film theatres (May, Homeward 165-166). The baby boom, migration to suburbia, television, increased availability of leisure opportunities, and different patterns of consumption led to a decrease in filmgoers. Weekly film attendance dropped from 90 million in 1946 to 60 million in 1950 (G. King 24). During the 1950s, general prosperity increased consumer spending power for the middle- and working-classes. Consumers spent more money on household furnishings and appliances, and on family pursuits such as travel, sports, gardening, and DIY (Balio, "Introduction" 3). Hollywood was also adversely affected by the Cold War, which disrupted international trade (Guback 474). A third factor that affected the industry's stability were the Paramount decrees, antitrust rulings that forced the major studios to divorce their exhibition practices from their production and distribution arms. The antitrust campaigns began, but were not very successful, in 1938 and they took on a new intensity after the war, ending in May 1948 (Borneman 449).³ The Supreme Court ruling mandated a dismantling of the organization of the Hollywood film industry, which marked the beginning of the end for the studio era, and of the power the major studios wielded during this period (Anderson, Hollywood TV 6).

The studios' power had been in their exhibition holdings: ownership of large theatres in important areas in major cities guaranteed an outlet for the studios' films, and the exhibition practices (where most of the profits were made) subsidised the high costs of production. Although Hollywood's revenues soared to an all-time high in 1946 (annual box office receipts totalling \$1.692 billion), early 1947 saw a sharp fall in attendance and the number of box-office hits, which signalled that the industry had entered a period of rapid decline. Box-office grosses fell to \$1.594 billion in 1947 and \$1.376 billion in 1950 (Balio, "Retrenchment" 401; Schatz, Boom 290). The decline in box-office takings brought changes in production, most notably a shift to fewer but more expensive A films and an increase in the production of low-budget films, as studios did not want to take risks by producing strings of big-budget films that could not generate sufficient profit (Staiger, "Hollywood 1930-60" 332). Film attendance not only decreased, but audience composition and taste changed as well. The film industry attempted to lure audiences back to the cinemas through intensively publicized films that relied on spectacle, for example through the use of widescreen or the production of large-scale epics or multi-star films (Belton, "Glorious" 185). Cinema also suffered from the growth of television. The number of television sets in use soared from 14,000 in 1947 to 4 million in 1950 and to 32 million in 1954 (Balio, "Introduction" 15). From the mid-1950s audiences could watch pre-1948 films on

television for free, which meant they were more reluctant to spend money at the cinema (Lafferty 240-241).

The industry's rapid decline led many studios to lay off staff, including stars, directors, and writers, who were either forced into early retirement or freelancing. However, studios reduced their personnel only gradually. In 1945, for example, the majors had 804 actors under contract, in 1950 474, and in 1955 only 209 (Lev 26). Many stars freelanced to have more creative and financial control over their images and films. To avoid paying huge amounts of income tax over their post-war salaries, stars often started production companies to produce their own films and from which they received a share of the films' profits (Gomery, "Hollywood" 50). Stars who formed their own production companies include Humphrey Bogart (Santana Productions), Burt Lancaster (Norma Productions), Kirk Douglas (Bryna Productions) and Ida Lupino (various companies). Talent agency MCA was especially adept at packaging its clients by "incorporating" them and "selling" them to studios and producers so that the client did not have to pay income taxes. Lew Wasserman, president of MCA, used the technique in famous cases such as Jack Benny's deal with CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) and James Stewart's deal for Winchester 73 (d. Anthony Mann, US, 1950) (Bruck 114). Powerful talent agencies would offer package deals of its stars, writers, and directors to Hollywood producers. The packaging of successful projects would generate income for the agency and its client(s), as well as possible future deals (Bruck 91).

Ageing Stars

By the 1950s, the 1930s cohort of female stars (e.g. Stanwyck, Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, and Ginger Rogers) was replaced by a new generation, including Elizabeth Taylor, Doris Day, Marilyn Monroe, and Audrey Hepburn. The first group consisted of actresses who had become stars with the coming of sound (most of them were born between 1900 and 1910), and when these stars were "old" (i.e. over forty) they were slowly replaced by the latter group (Lincoln and Allen 616). To illustrate, of the top stars in 1946, only one of the four women (Greer Carson) was over forty (Schatz, Boom 470). The careers of many older female stars began to fade at this time. Yet some mature stars had a career boost in the immediate post-war years, for example Katharine Hepburn--whose reteaming with Spencer Tracy in State of the Union (d. Frank Capra, US, 1948) and Adam's Rib (d. George Cukor, US, 1949) proved successful. Although Stanwyck's and Hepburn's careers briefly picked up in the late 1940s, they now diminished due to changing audience tastes, the lack of available starring vehicles for mature women, and broader industrial shifts. The careers of many male stars of similar age, such as James Stewart, Gary Cooper, and Cary Grant, however, flourished (Schatz, Boom 470-471).

Stanwyck as a mature role model

Make-up artists ran into various “problems” with the older stars, most notably wrinkles and greying hair. Grey hair was especially a “problem” for Stanwyck, as she went prematurely grey in the 1940s. Studios touched up pictures and stills, but Stanwyck refused to dye her hair.⁴ A Paramount publicity story for The File on Thelma Jordon noted that Stanwyck “won’t dye it for anything except perhaps a brief character sequence.”⁵ As hostess of The Barbara Stanwyck Show in 1961, Stanwyck drew attention to her hair in the closing sequence for the episode “Frightened Doll”: “Some of my friends say I should go back to [my natural hair colour]. Why should I? It’s just prematurely gray, that’s all.”⁶ Similarly, an article about Clash by Night (d. Fritz Lang, US, 1952) noted that Stanwyck “never dyed her hair to look younger since it started to gray 15 years ago.”⁷ The press book for The Great Man’s Lady (1942) mentioned Stanwyck’s greying hair and her refusal to dye it in the article “Graying Hair No Handicap To Glamour,” adding that when Stanwyck wore three pronounced grey streaks in the film “she is at her most glamorous in the entire film.” Stanwyck’s standard biography even noted in the late 1940s that she was turning grey, “which she makes no attempt to hide.”⁸ The grey hair thus became part of Stanwyck’s image. When Stanwyck signed with glamour studio MGM in 1948, MGM’s head designer Irene supposedly decreed that the long greying hair had to go because “no actress can have white hair. No one wants to make love to a gray-haired lady. [. . .] To be over forty isn’t possible [in Hollywood]” (Holland 78). The short haircut emphasized Stanwyck’s hair colour, but she still refused to dye it because she had “no desire to hide [her] age.”⁹ Although Stanwyck’s grey hair looked blond in black and white films, for her colour films she was supplied with (red or blond) wigs (figure 20). Apparently (male) film producers and make-up designers agreed with Irene, and Stanwyck’s grey hair was covered-up. In an interview in Photoplay in 1984 Stanwyck said: “I’ve always been the only Hollywood glamour star with grey hair and I refused to do anything about it [. . .].” (Perry 42). Her snowy white hair became Stanwyck’s trademark in the final stages of her career (Golden 69).

According to Paramount publicity stories, Stanwyck never hesitated to play her age on film, including women older than herself.¹⁰ In various articles she readily admitted to her real age. An article about Stanwyck from 1949 entitled “Frankly 42!” immediately drew attention to her age. According to journalist Adela Rogers St. Johns, Stanwyck was “the only star in Hollywood whose routine biography carries the year of her birth.” Indeed, all the biographies I have read include her birth date and/or year.¹¹ Unlike male stars, female stars lost work as a result of their ageing. Research by sociologists Anne Lincoln and Michael Allen confirmed “significant negative effects of being female and being older on the number of roles received by actors and their average star presence” (611).



Figure 20: Stanwyck with a blond/fair wig in RKO's Cattle Queen of Montana (left, 1954), a red wig in Republic's The Maverick Queen (centre, 1956), and her own hair colour for NBC's The Barbara Stanwyck Show (right, 1960).

It is therefore somewhat peculiar for Stanwyck to be promoted as mature, when many stars of her generation were hiding their age to receive work. For example, there has been speculation about Jean Arthur's age as various sources cite years between 1900 and 1908 (Oller 19-26). Similarly, Kay Francis's date of birth "shifted in the way birth dates always seem to do for female movie stars" (Basinger 154). Promoting Stanwyck as mature differentiated her from the other female stars of her generation, which meant that it was likely for studios to approach Stanwyck--rather than her contemporaries who did not want to be known as mature--when they required a mature female star. Her visibility as a mature woman in the labour market was particularly useful, since stars no longer relied on studios to assign roles to them, but, together with their agents, had to be more proactive about their careers.

Because Stanwyck did not hide her age, she was apparently considered a suitable model to advise female audiences about maturity. There is a notable increase in articles detailing Stanwyck's advice for mature women in the 1950s. In various articles Stanwyck commented on the pros of getting older, and gave beauty and dietary advice. To illustrate, in an article in Photoplay Stanwyck said that she "never understood why women want to be forever 'young'" and that her indifference to having her birth year in her biography "confounded some people."¹² At the age of forty-four, Stanwyck was quoted as saying that the "40s are a wonderful, challenging decade" when a woman could "really appreciate life." Stanwyck also explained how she "stayed so slim" at her age: "I watch my food and I don't diet." She advised women to eat "vegetables and meat" and "avoid rich desserts and bread and butter."¹³ Journalist Lydia Lane published a series of articles for the Los Angeles Times in which she used Stanwyck as a mature role model. One of the articles argued that Stanwyck could "get away with gray hair because she has such a young face and little girl sheen to her skin," suggesting that Stanwyck's wholesome, natural look, fitted with her naturally grey hair. This also suited Stanwyck's remark in that same article that "there is nothing prettier than the freshly scrubbed, outdoor look the American Girl has."¹⁴ This suggested that, by looking wholesome and healthy, older women could still look young. Several articles noted that Stanwyck predominantly wore "simple, tailored suits," and consequently emphasized Stanwyck's connotations of natural.¹⁵ Her naturalness was not only emphasized by Stanwyck's refusal to dye her hair and her diet. Stanwyck noted that she did not "give too much about beauty aids," which also alluded to her naturalness.¹⁶ Many of the articles that considered Stanwyck as a role model used information from Stanwyck's biographies; therefore the same information is repeated in different articles. Most articles emphasized Stanwyck's eating habits (a simple diet of steak and vegetables), her refusal to dye her hair, the simplicity of her clothes, and her dedication to her career.¹⁷ That Stanwyck admitted to her real age and refused to hide her grey hair reinforced her image as

natural and ordinary. Gossip columnist Hedda Hopper argued that Stanwyck's "graying hair is indicative not so much of her age as of her honesty--a quality that has endeared her to all of us [. . .]." ¹⁸ This quotation and the other articles evidence of Stanwyck's maturity as natural, and as a differentiation from other, glamorous stars. Her naturalness and maturity were two of Stanwyck's unique selling points.

These connections between Stanwyck's maturity and her naturalness were contrasted with references to Stanwyck's femininity. Because it can be argued that Stanwyck's refusal to dye her hair or use beauty aids could be read as unfeminine, other promotional articles attempted to portray Stanwyck as feminine. Stanwyck's biographies repeatedly stated that her personal clothes were "often designed by Edith Head" and that her "dinner and evening gowns are exquisitely feminine." ¹⁹ However, unlike Stanwyck's greying hair and her dietary information, information about her "feminine" clothing was rarely repeated in publicity articles. Similarly, in a promotional article for The File on Thelma Jordon, Stanwyck supposedly noted that "[a]ll a woman has to do [to get married] is to be feminine. She shouldn't try to compete with men [. . .]." ²⁰ This is a strange remark from a woman whose career overshadowed her first husband's and at times also her second husband's, and who played female characters that competed with their male opponents in films such as Illicit, The Lady Eve, and Double Indemnity. However, because Stanwyck played an unsympathetic character in The File on Thelma Jordon (and many other films), the articles that discussed Stanwyck as very feminine, could have been used to assure audiences that off-screen Stanwyck was different from the characters she played. This also occurred in the 1930s (see chapter one). An article ascribed to Stanwyck in Screen Stars confirms this argument: "Acting the part of a bewildered, unbalanced woman [in The File on Thelma Jordon] doesn't mean I agree with or approve such females. I most certainly do not. But they are challenging and interesting roles to play" ("Love" 23).

Although Stanwyck was used as role model for mature women, the obvious ageing did not help her career. Stanwyck and Taylor divorced in 1950, but because publicity about Stanwyck had been focusing on her career rather than her married life for most of the 1940s, this did not change much after the divorce. During the 1950s and 1960s there is a notable decrease in the number of articles about Stanwyck in fan magazines such as Photoplay, Movieland, and Modern Screen. Other print media (particularly newspapers such as the Los Angeles Times) continued to write about Stanwyck, albeit focusing on her career. Apparently a single, mature, female star was not an interesting topic for film magazines. As scholar Susan Hayward argues, the ageing of female stars destroys the image of perfection built up by star publicity because "ageing is too real--not the 'real' we want to see" (340). Unlike feature film, television in the 1950s and 1960s brought this "reality" to the viewer when it juxtaposed recent

performances by older stars in television series with films that these stars had made early in their careers. Since Stanwyck had been honest about her age and her grey hair, the juxtaposed images of a younger and older Stanwyck on television did not emphasize her ageing since she had already gone through that phase while still working steadily in film.

Stanwyck's Maturity and Her Film Roles

In the 1950s, the careers of many mature female stars suffered because they were no longer tied to studios that would develop roles for them. Because Stanwyck had not been a contract star, this change did not influence her career as much. The broader industrial shifts described earlier meant that there were fewer films and fewer roles for mature women. Stanwyck referred to this fact in an article in the Philadelphia Sun-Bulletin, noting that there were “no good screen roles for attractive but mature women.” She also mentioned the “double jeopardy” that occurs between mature male and female stars: “Male stars go on and on. The only parts [for mature female stars] are harridans in horror pictures” (Lincoln and Allen 612).²¹ Many female stars of Stanwyck's generation indeed played “harridans in horror pictures” in the 1960s (see chapter five), but Stanwyck performed in a variety of films during the 1950s and 1960s. In this section I will examine how Stanwyck's image as a mature star was used in different production trends.

The “mature woman” drama

Mary Astor lamented in her autobiography that female stars above a certain age in the early 1950s were relegated to motherly roles or to roles of married women who were caged in by their marriage (194). Besides her performances in Westerns, Stanwyck featured in a number of women-centred films, albeit no longer in the role of young mother or independent working girl but as a mature woman. Maternal roles or playing opposite a younger female star drew attention to the mature stars' ageing. During the 1950s, Stanwyck's performances in what I term “mature woman” dramas increased noticeably. Many of these films arguably fall in the (family) melodrama genre. This is a broad category of films that emerged as a consequence of identification of films largely made in the 1940s and 1950s which exposed the tensions and contradictions that lay beneath the surface of post-war suburban American life (Elsaesser 179-181). The mature woman dramas focus on the problems and insecurities of an older, mature woman. The ageing character matches the maturity of the actress. The age of the woman is key here: she is mature, usually married (or divorced), and often returning to a place (frequently home) after a period of absence. The woman's return draws attention to her past and to the way her absence influenced her behaviour: this turned her into an outsider. The mature woman is often unable to submit to domestic life, either because she finds domestic life suffocating or because she is too career-oriented. Another key element that can be found in most of the films is

the appearance of a younger woman, either as competition (e.g. East Side, West Side [d. Mervyn LeRoy, US, 1949]) or as a companion who could be a younger version of the mature woman (e.g. Clash by Night). For many veteran female stars, mature woman dramas were the only films that provided “meaty” roles, even if the films drew attention to the stars’ age (e.g. The Star [d. Stuart Heisler, US, 1952], Pocketful of Miracles [d. Frank Capra, US, 1961], and Lady in a Cage [d. Walter Grauman, US, 1964]). For Stanwyck, it meant that many of her characters in these dramas were mature versions of her 1930s characters.

Stanwyck performed in a number of mature woman films, including All I Desire (d. Douglas Sirk, US, 1953), The Lady Gambles, and There’s Always Tomorrow (d. Douglas Sirk, US, 1956). In the following section I examine one of Stanwyck’s many mature woman dramas: Clash by Night. Clash by Night is an example of a mature woman drama that deals with gender tensions, and with men and women struggling to deal with moral behaviour and domesticity. According to John Bodnar, these were the main “problems” that mature women experienced in the post-war era (146). Many of Stanwyck’s previous characters had struggled with domesticity (e.g. in Illicit, The Purchase Price, The Bride Walks Out, and Christmas in Connecticut) and this aspect had been present in Stanwyck’s image since the early 1930s, both onscreen and off. As noted in chapter one, Stanwyck’s first marriage ended because career choices drove the couple apart. This was also, allegedly, the reason for the divorce between Stanwyck and Taylor (see chapter five). The foregrounding of her career rather than her family life in Stanwyck’s image, as well as her divorces, suggested her struggles with domesticity. The inability to submit to domesticity is also the main topic of many of Stanwyck’s mature woman films and particularly of Clash by Night.

In this film, Stanwyck plays Mae Doyle, a sophisticated but bitter, restless woman who returns to her home town and marries simple fisherman Jerry (Paul Douglas) for security. Jerry believes Mae is too sophisticated for him because she seems to have travelled widely. When he asks her to marry him, Mae answers: “I wouldn’t make a good wife for you. I’m one of those women who’s never satisfied.” After Mae marries Jerry, domesticity takes the form of a small house with a baby and Jerry’s father (Silvio Minciotti). Mae’s eventual domestic dissatisfaction leads to an affair with Earl (Robert Ryan), Jerry’s best friend. Although Mae is attracted to Earl, she believes he is unable to provide her with the sense of stability she thinks she desires. When Jerry finds out about Mae and Earl, Mae defends her actions with an attack on her containment in the house: “Nothing changes. The days go by, down to the grocery store, back to the house, hang out the wash....” The affair results in violence and a wrecked home, until Mae decides to go back to Jerry and their child. She cannot give up her identity as a mother, even if it means living with a man she does not love. Parallel to this runs a plotline where Mae’s younger brother

Joe (Keith Andes) tries to dominate his girlfriend Peggy (Marilyn Monroe), and which shows Peggy's adulation of the sophisticated Mae. Peggy seems a younger version of Mae before she left the small fisherman town: yearning for excitement and unwilling to be bossed around by any man.

Clash by Night ultimately upholds the dominant social values of marriage and motherhood, but only after the alternatives have been explored (May, Homeward 183; Bodnar 146). Mae is worldly, but searches for security (or so she believes) while at the same time she is unable to submit to domesticity. That Mae is considered worldly and sophisticated results from her absence from the small town. This small town has few options for her as a woman, as it is dominated by a fish canning industry. The film questions the imperative to serve traditional roles by divulging the difficulties of marriage and challenging the positive idealizations of American life (May, Homeward 118,133; Bodnar 146). It provides a mature Stanwyck with a "meaty," but familiar role: a woman who cannot submit to domesticity and challenges the boundaries of patriarchy and gender. However, Mae's return to her hometown after years of absence, and the contrast between the domestic, older couple (Jerry and Mae) and the free, younger couple (Joe and Peggy), draw significant attention to Stanwyck/Mae's maturity.

The multi-star film

After the Paramount decrees were enforced, studios were without guaranteed outlets and therefore tried to increase audience numbers through big-budget and multi-star productions. They also introduced new technological devices such as widescreen, 3-D, and stereo sound ("3D" 5). Stanwyck performed in two such big-budget films: the epic Titanic (d. Jean Negulesco, US, 1953) and the multi-star film Executive Suite (d. Robert Wise, US, 1954). I will focus my examination on Executive Suite because the film is an example of the shift in film content at the time. The place of Stanwyck in this film, with an all-star ensemble cast, is more interesting than her leading lady role in Titanic. The multi-star film tried to attract audiences through the marquee values of its stars, as well as high production values and top directors ("Films Coming" 4). Because Executive Suite was an ensemble film, the ten stars had to divide screen time amongst them, leading to less screen time for the individual stars than they were accustomed to. The film was very popular at the box office, demonstrating its topical content ("National Box Office" 3). In the economically prosperous post-war era, popular culture celebrated success in business (May, Homeward 174; Boozer 18). In the mid-1950s, however, entrepreneurial success was replaced by the ideal of success in the workplace and at home (May, Homeward 176).²² Protagonists had to balance their private family life and the public world. Elizabeth Long argues that within this corporate universe individuals depended on others for happiness, and on the company for a job (52-76). Many novels from this period were

adapted for the screen, including The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit and Executive Suite. In these stories, the protagonist is a corporate hero who is part of the bureaucratic machinery, and who wants to move up the corporate ladder without sacrificing his family. Success was ultimately defined by having a secure and balanced life rather than being at the top.

In the mid- and late 1950s, these stories became part of a Hollywood cycle (which ended in 1958) of big business and self-referential film such as The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit (d. Nunnally Johnson, US, 1956), Patterns (d. Fielder Cook, US, 1956), and Woman's World (d. Jean Negulesco, US, 1954) (Boozier 18). The films were less concerned with the actual work that was going on in the businesses, but more with the absorption of family life into the corporate culture. Many "corporate executive" films follow similar narratives: one man has to be selected from a group of senior executives to head a firm. During this selection process, the protagonists have to balance family life, corporate attitude, and ethics to demonstrate their ability to lead the firm. The emphasis is placed on the protagonists' marital life which often overshadows the importance of the job ahead. This is especially visible in Woman's World, where a firm's head believes that an executive's wife is crucial to the success of her husband and he invites three couples to New York to assess them. The suitable executive with the appropriate wife is selected to head the firm. These stories re-enforced popular ideology that the family gave purpose to a man's efforts (May, Homeward 176).

Executive Suite tries to apply that idea in its plot. When Avery Bullard (Raoul Freeman), head of the Tredway Company, suddenly dies, one of the male executives is expected to take over the company which leads to a power struggle amongst them. They need to vote to decide between the blackmailing bachelor Loren Shaw (Frederic March) and the happily married team player MacDonald Walling (William Holden). Executive Suite pushes family ethics as a deciding factor in the competition for the company's leadership. Stanwyck plays neurotic Julia Tredway, daughter of the company's founder and lover of Bullard. She is also the company's major shareholder, the only woman on the executive board, and she holds the crucial vote. She is distraught and bitter over Bullard's death and her resentment manifests itself in a series of manipulative acts to jeopardize the company. The narrative contrasts Julia with Walling's wife Mary (June Allyson). Julia represents business, Mary domesticity. Julia counsels Mary--who initially tries to discourage her husband from taking the position because she fears it will interfere with their family life--that she should support her husband, even when he shuts her out, demonstrating the harshness of business life that Julia is familiar with. These opposing characters are played by actresses with contrasting star images. Stanwyck was known for her tough, independent characters, whereas Allyson had become the embodiment of sweet wholesomeness. In the later part of her film career she often played "supportive wife" roles, for

example in The Glenn Miller Story (d. Anthony Mann, US, 1954), Woman's World, and Strategic Air Command (d. Anthony Mann, US, 1955). Stanwyck's image as a mature woman was not foregrounded in the film because most stars in the cast were from Stanwyck's generation. Unlike East Side, West Side, where Stanwyck plays opposite the much younger Ava Gardner, Executive Suite contrasts Julia and Mary, two women of similar age, and therefore Stanwyck's (and Allyson's) ageing is not particularly emphasised. Many multi-star films (such as Woman's World and Deep in My Heart [d. Stanley Donen, US, 1954]) featured a mature cast. New stars of the 1950s and 1960s were regularly offered their own film vehicles so that they could be singled out rather than share the spotlight with other stars ("Quota" 71; "Hollywood's Age" 3).

The youth film

Films with a mature all-star cast reminded audiences about the glory days of the Hollywood studio system. Increasing teenage and adolescent audiences, however, were probably less familiar with the stars of Stanwyck's generation. Films particularly aimed at this audience demographic starred new stars such as Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, and Marlon Brando ("Hollywood's Age" 3). Roustabout is Stanwyck's only youth film. The film used its star--Elvis Presley--to appeal to teenagers and adolescents and it was part of a cycle of Elvis musicals in the 1960s. Presley was under contract to Hal Wallis--who had produced number of Stanwyck's films in the 1940s (see chapter two)--since 1956 and made a few films before being drafted for army duty in 1958 (Rose 267). These early films (e.g. King Creole [d. Michael Curtiz, US, 1958]) glamorised delinquency and featured Presley as a teenage rebel (Caine 75). In his post 1960 films, Presley's persona was less rebellious, and Wallis used Presley's popularity as a patriotic hero by putting him in formulaic travelogue musicals that exploited his looks and his singing ability--e.g. Blue Hawaii (d. Norman Taurog, US, 1961), Viva Las Vegas (d. George Sidney, US, 1964), and Girl Happy (d. Boris Sagal, US, 1965). These films consisted of a recurring set of characteristics including exciting and stimulating jobs--e.g. a race-car driver (Viva Las Vegas), a trapeze artist turned lifeguard (Fun in Acapulco [d. Richard Thorpe, US, 1963]), or a small-aircraft pilot (It Happened at the World's Fair [d. Norman Taurog, US, 1963])--as well as music, exotic or well-known locations (e.g. Las Vegas, Mexico, a carnival, a ranch, an Indian reservation), and romance.



Figure 21: Stanwyck in matronly costumes in Universal's There's Always Tomorrow (left) and MGM's These Wilder Years (centre, d. Roy Rowland, US, 1956) and in a jeans ensemble in Paramount's Roustabout (right).

Roustabout is an example of these travelogues. Here, Stanwyck plays Maggie Morgan, the determined owner of a travelling carnival who hires wandering tough guy Charlie Rogers (Presley). When Charlie learns that Maggie's carnival is in financial trouble, he displays his singing talent which attracts large crowds. He leaves the carnival, however, after a fight with Maggie's foreman Joe (Leif Erickson), which leads to Maggie's financial ruin. When Charlie realizes he is in love with Joe's daughter Cathy (Joan Freeman) he returns and his singing saves Maggie's carnival from bankruptcy. Maggie shares certain characteristics with Stanwyck's previous characters, providing a continuation of Stanwyck's earlier image. Maggie is a woman in charge (in this case of a carnival), tough (she carries the burden of the carnival alone), and independent. Even though the carnival is on its last legs, Maggie seems calm and relaxed, particularly compared to Joe's and Charlie's frantic behaviour. As in Clash by Night, Stanwyck's role is that of an advisor to a younger person. In Clash by Night Stanwyck's character gives advice about life and love to a younger sister-in-law, in Roustabout Maggie teaches Charlie to be loyal and unselfish. Stanwyck's characters' maturity is in both films connected to wisdom and authority as opposed to the more unstable and childish younger characters/actors.

For the role of Maggie Wallis wanted "someone with stature" (which seems to be equal to "older") who could stand up against Presley's character (Rose 270). Stanwyck was not the first choice for the role, which was Mae West. Because West declined and Bette Davis was too expensive, Stanwyck was signed because Wallis knew her. Like Presley she was a client of the William Morris Agency, and her asking price was only \$30,000.²³ Stanwyck was also "intrigued [. . .] because it would bring [her] into a younger audience than [she was] accustomed to" (sic) (Hahn). Costume designer Edith Head told the press that teaming Stanwyck with Presley was "a stroke of genius" because it "gave him credence as an actor [. . .]" (Head and Calistro 195). Head costumed Stanwyck in jeans, an unusual style for a woman in her late fifties as jeans were usually associated with youth, but the jeans made Stanwyck look younger and tougher than some of her other matronly costumes (figure 21).

The publicity for the film obviously focused on Presley. A film poster depicts Presley on his motorbike, with smaller images of Stanwyck and Freeman on either side of him. The image of Stanwyck is slightly smaller than Freeman's, but because of the colouring (she is wearing a bright yellow shirt), Stanwyck stands out more. Freeman's image shows her running (youthful), with flaring skirts and an anxious face, while Stanwyck's pose is relaxed and confident (mature). She has her jacket thrown over one shoulder, her other hand in her trouser pocket, and one foot in front of the other thereby suggesting self-confidence and authority (figure 22).

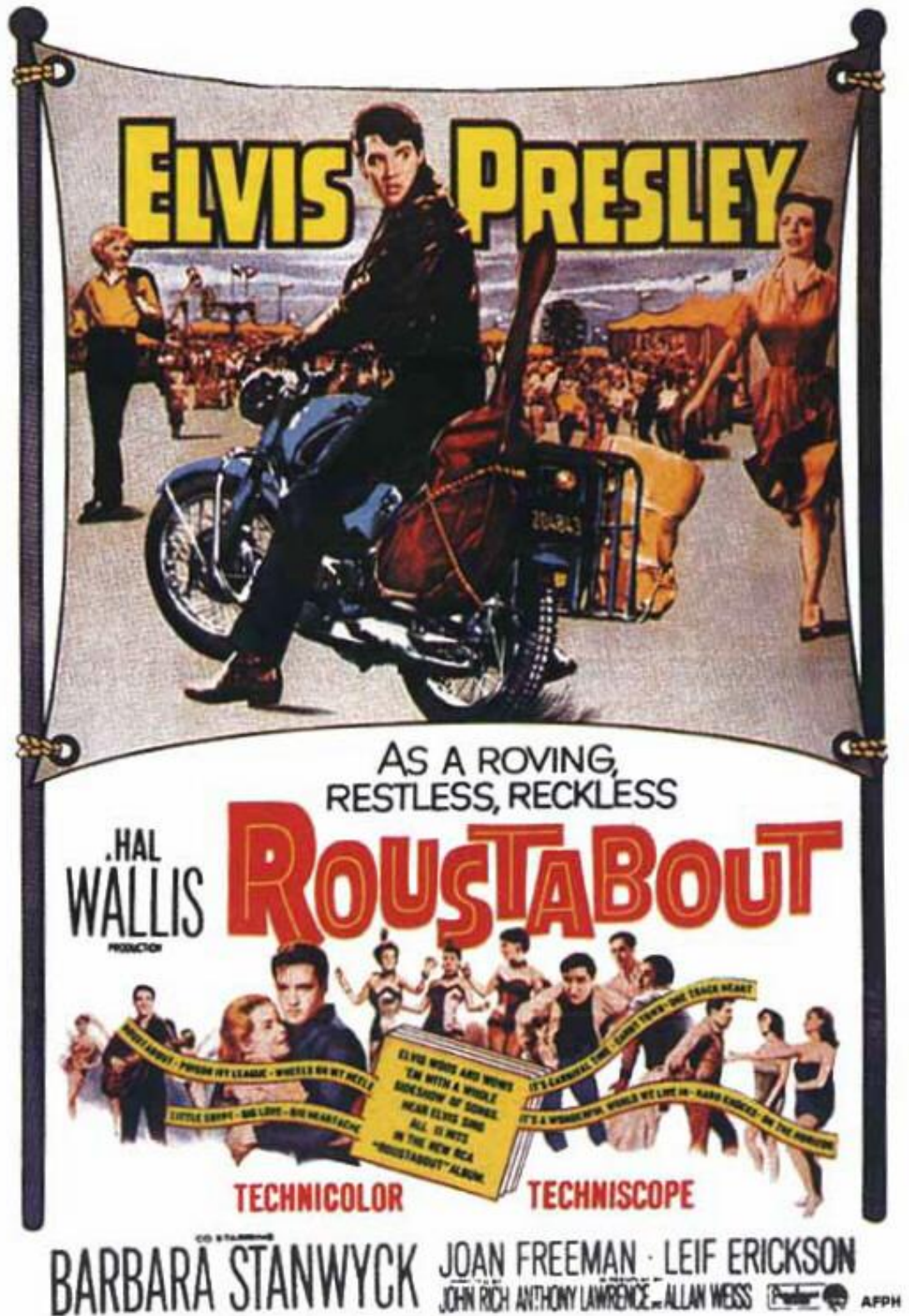


Figure 22: The poster for Paramount's Roustabout shows Stanwyck (top left corner) as mature and confident.



Figure 23: Paramount's promotional materials suggest the bond between the young Presley and the mature Stanwyck.

Other publicity materials show Stanwyck and Presley together in various ways: enjoying carnival rides, riding a motorbike, and waiting for a scene to be set up. These photos seem to promote a bond between the younger Presley and the older Stanwyck, as well as between Charlie and Maggie; the photographs suggest a mother/son or teacher/pupil relationship which is also evident in the film (figure 23).²⁴ As such, Stanwyck's appearance as a mature and wise(r) woman is opposed to Presley's "roving, restless, reckless roustabout." While it was inevitable that films drew attention to Stanwyck's ageing, and although her ageing limited the sort of roles she could play, Stanwyck still performed in various films for different audience demographics. This meant that she received more exposure than many of her contemporaries who made fewer and generally less varied films. Nonetheless, Stanwyck's ageing was overshadowed in the mid-1950s by her performances in Westerns.

The Hollywood Western

Westerns played an important part in Stanwyck's image because a large proportion of Stanwyck's final feature films were Westerns, and because she continuously stated her interest in the genre. Both during her career in the 1950s and retrospectively (in the 1980s), Stanwyck said that her favourite genre--whether to view or to work in--was the Western. She was "crazy about Westerns, that's why [she] made so many of them" and she believed that the Western was "our [American] royalty, our aristocracy" (Drew 43, 45).²⁵ The genre also offered Stanwyck the opportunity to play characters who, as she said, were "real frontier women."²⁶ She often stated that she wanted "to play a cowgirl who rides off into the sunset and leaves the man minding the kids."²⁷ It seems rather surprising that a mature female star would want to work in the Western where women were generally relegated to the margins of the plot. Stanwyck's fascination with the Western, however, fitted with her unfeminine image (refusing to dye her hair, not caring about beauty aids, etc.).

The increase in Stanwyck's Western performances in the 1950s and 1960s was an effect of a change in output in the Hollywood film industry in the post-war era. The number of Westerns increased to replace the masculine genre of the combat film, production of which had been cut back at the end of the war (Schatz, *Boom* 371). Major studios such as Paramount, Fox, and MGM produced A Westerns and smaller studios such as Republic and Monogram turned out B Westerns. Notable A Westerns include *Duel in the Sun* (d. King Vidor, US, 1947) and *Red River* (d. Howard Hawks, US, 1948). Notable B Westerns include *Colorado Sundown* (d. William Whitney, US, 1952) and *Two Guns and a Badge* (d. Lewis D. Collins, US, 1954). Many of the Westerns produced in this period were small-scale or B Westerns. The genre of the Western, however, is difficult to define because it continuously changes, and the definition of a Western is under constant discussion (Kitses 23-27; Pye 15). Scholars do not even agree on a

canon of Westerns (Kitses 21). As the Western is generally conceived to be a genre that profiles traditional masculinity (Western scholar Will Wright, for example, does not account for female protagonists in the genre), the Westerns that feature female heroines seem “unnatural” and often fall outside debates on the genre. Many of Stanwyck’s Westerns are therefore marginalized in discussions about the genre. Another reason for the marginalization of many of Stanwyck’s Westerns can be that her films are not seen as Westerns, but as a combination of the Western and the women’s picture. Scholarship on the Western uses a small number of films to interpret models of the genre which leads to the exclusion of many Westerns that do not exactly fit these limited models. Certain changes in the Western, however, are more important than others for the development of the genre. Furthermore, especially changes to the Western’s narrative in the post-war era had influential consequences for Stanwyck’s (and other female stars’) performances in the genre.

Narrative changes opened up opportunities for female stars to have leading roles in the genre.²⁸ According to an article in the New York Times in 1947, in the post-war era the Western attempted “to tell an adult story of the development of the characters,” which was “based on the idea that a clash of guns is not necessarily a replacement for a clash of emotions” (Spinrad X4). Similarly, Thomas Schatz suggests three perceived differences between post-war Westerns and previous “classical” Westerns. The classical Western can be defined as “the story of the lone stranger who rides into a troubled town and cleans it up, winning the respect of the townsfolk and the love of the schoolmarm” (Wright 32). This is exemplified by films such as Shane (d. George Stevens, US, 1953), Union Pacific (d. Cecil B. DeMille, US, 1939), and Dodge City (d. Michael Curtiz, US, 1939). By comparison, later Westerns projected “a less optimistic and more unflattering vision of the West’s potential synthesis of nature and culture.” Secondly, the post-war Western hero is less concerned with law and order and has become “a renegade, a professional killer, an antihero.” Finally, the later Westerns are “less simple, tidy, and naïve, more ambiguous, complex, and ironic, more self-critical” (Schatz, Hollywood Genres 37; Kitses 17).

Various scholars have argued that in the post-war period the identity and agency of the lone hero became a source of tension (Pye 15; Wright 86). Michael Coyne, for example, argues that between 1950 and 1961 the Western increasingly focused on the cost of pioneer achievement rather than on its glory, as the genre had previously done (66). According to John Cawelti, however, this narrative transformation from westward advancement to the destruction of the Western wilderness by the troubling advances of settlement was already visible in the novels of James Fenimore Cooper from the eighteenth century. Cawelti argues that this transformation in Cooper’s novels “summarises the evolution of the Western from the epic of

the pioneers in the nineteenth century to the ambiguous myth of the gunfighter in the 1950s [Western film]" (Cawelti, Adventure 195). Frank Gruber, writer of pulp Westerns, suggests that many of the films that focus on the cost of pioneer achievement fall in a category of plotlines that he names the "ranch story." These stories "focus on conflicts between ranchers and rustlers or cattlemen and sheepmen" (sic) (qtd. in Cawelti, Six-Gun 19). The ranch story demonstrates the troubles that could be found in the West, rather than the glories. An example of a ranch story is Stanwyck's film The Violent Men (d. Rudolphe Maté, US, 1955).²⁹ In the film Lee Wilkison (Edward G. Robinson), a lame and embittered cattle owner, spends his time expunging the region's smaller cattle owners. He is spurred on by his wife Martha (Stanwyck) who divides her time between her husband's empire and her husband's brother. Retired army officer John Parrish (Glenn Ford) is one of the local homesteaders who have resisted Wilkison's threats. He has to pay for this by losing his fiancée and his ranch hand. The Wilkisons and their hirelings are eventually trapped in a blaze on their ranch, wiping away most of the clan. The film demonstrates the costs of pioneer achievement through its depiction of a dysfunctional family affected by greed and power.

A similar plot can be found in Stanwyck's The Furies. This film centres on a conflict between T.C. Jeffords (Walter Huston), owner of an extensive ranch in New Mexico called The Furies, and his daughter Vance (Stanwyck). Both are strong, passionate, and impulsive characters. Their conflict peaks when Vance stabs T.C.'s fiancée (Judith Anderson) with scissors, disfiguring her face. T.C. responds by hanging Vance's friend Juan Herrera (Gilbert Roland) as a horse thief. The Herreras have lived on T.C.'s land for generations and customarily take what they need. Vance breaks with her father and eventually buys out the ranch. T.C. takes his daughter's success in good grace but after their reconciliation he is shot dead by Juan's mother. A dysfunctional family is once more the centre of the film and through the family the tensions between various groups (ranch owner T.C. and the original settlers, the Herreras) are played out. T.C. reigns his empire as "a feudal lord," but is defeated by his daughter and the Herreras (The Furies). When T.C. hangs Juan he breaks a promise of safe conduct for the Herreras from the ranch and as such violates the Western wilderness.

Stanwyck's Western heroines

The Furies is also an example of a post-war era Western that demonstrates the changing roles for women. According to David Thomson, women in the classical Western "are there as stooges or excuses. They are allowed to die, or worse; they are placid smiling, an obedient reward when ordeal is over" (qtd. in Pye 13). However, this traditional account of the woman in the Western does not fit many of Stanwyck's roles in Westerns where the plot focuses, or gives much room to, a female perspective (e.g. The Maverick Queen [d. Joe Kane, US, 1956] and

Cattle Queen of Montana). Stanwyck's first Western Annie Oakley (1935) already raised questions about genre and femininity: as a female sharpshooter nobody believes Annie's ability to defeat the male world champion (Toby). As a woman, she has to prove herself in a male world and Annie eventually triumphs over Toby with her shooting skills. However, in the end the film puts Annie back in her place: in the arms of Toby. Her transgression of gender boundaries is reversed and she is no longer superior to the man. The film can be seen as a precursor for Stanwyck's later Westerns: Stanwyck's character cannot have both love (and femininity) and continue her unfeminine behaviour (the most obvious example of this can be found in Forty Guns [d. Samuel Fuller, US, 1957], discussed later in this chapter). Until the 1950s, Stanwyck appeared in only three other Westerns: Union Pacific, The Great Man's Lady, and California. In the 1950s she made eight Westerns and in the 1960s guest-starred in television Westerns such as Zane Grey Theater and Rawhide (1959-1966) (see appendix A). In what follows I examine the characters that Stanwyck played in the post-war era Westerns. Here, Stanwyck usually played wise-cracking, cynical, and aggressive women who demanded respect and elicited fear from the men they were fighting, for example in Forty Guns, The Maverick Queen, and Cattle Queen of Montana.

Many of Stanwyck's characters were unfeminine women who challenged conventional gender identities and boundaries. They were unfeminine in their manners: e.g. they were forward in sexual behaviour (in Baby Face), aggressive and greedy (in Double Indemnity and The Violent Men), physically active (in Forty Guns and Cry Wolf), or unable to submit to domesticity (in Illicit). They were also often unfeminine in appearance: e.g. they wore slacks, spurs, and guns, particularly in adventure films and Westerns. Although it can be argued that Stanwyck's characters were masculine rather than unfeminine, I prefer the term unfeminine because the term is more nuanced. In this case, what is at stake is a qualification of accepted or expected modalities of female identity. Stanwyck's characters are generally not masculine--in the sense that they possess some characteristics that are normally associated with males-- throughout the narrative. Stanwyck's heroines often have some of those characteristics, but their feminine characteristics always prevail. In most films, they either die or, more often, give in to love and they become (more) feminine. When their behaviour is masculine, e.g. in Double Indemnity, their appearance often is not--Phyllis is first seen wearing only a towel and uses her feminine looks (dresses, tight sweater that emphasizes the bust line, anklet, make-up) to draw Walter into her scheme. When their appearance is masculine, e.g. in The Maverick Queen, their manners are not--when Kit Banion (Stanwyck), Butch Cassidy's right hand, falls in love with detective Jeff Young (Barry Sullivan), she becomes motherly and caring, and wants to help Young escape the Wild Bunch.



Figure 24a: Stanwyck shot from a low angle, in focus, off-centre, and in the middle ground in Paramount's The Furies.



Figure 24b: Stanwyck shot from a low angle in Forty Guns. These characters are not just shot from a low angle to suggest power, but their position in the frame--off centre or in focus in the middle ground--also emphasises that a powerful woman in this context is rather unusual.

Stanwyck's unfeminine Western female protagonists are often positioned as the hero: they wear masculine clothing (slacks, boots, spurs), ride and shoot as well as any male hero, and are regularly involved in vigorous physical activity. Stanwyck's characters are often shot from a low angle (figure 24), which emphasizes their power. Martin Pumphrey argues that the post-war Westerns accommodated, in a manner similar to the femme fatale in films noirs, "the anxieties generated by the postwar entry of women into new areas of the labour force" (sic). He also notes that these Westerns challenged and ultimately overthrew the image of the male as breadwinner (57). Changes in gender roles in American post-war society legitimized the appearance of tough, masculine female protagonists in Westerns (e.g. Duel in the Sun, Rancho Notorious [d. Fritz Lang, US, 1952], and Johnny Guitar [d. Nicholas Ray, US, 1954]), at least until they succumbed to heterosexual romance or until they were punished for their transgression and for challenging patriarchy. Pam Cook argues that "it's unusual for the woman who starts out wearing pants, carrying a gun and riding a horse to still be doing so at the end of the movie. Suitably re-clad in dress or skirt, she prepares to take her place in the family, leaving adventure to the men" ("Women" 294).

This is most obvious in Stanwyck's film Forty Guns. The film was supposed to be produced by Fox, but studio production head Darryl Zanuck considered the story of a "strong woman" who runs a ranch and a corrupt empire to be "phoney" (qtd. in Dombrowski 108) and the script was shelved. Small production company Globe Enterprises, however, thrived on Westerns with unruly elements such as overly strong women and bought the script from Fox (Dombrowski 109). In Forty Guns Jessica Drummond (Stanwyck) is a landowner, leader of a posse of forty men, who takes the law in her own hands. She is dressed in black, wears pants, and carries a gun. Jessica falls in love with US Marshal Griff Bonnell and gives up her power, pride, and control. However, when Griff tracks down Jessica's brother Brockie (John Ericson) to revenge Brockie's murder of his brother Wes Bonnell (Gene Barry), Griff deliberately shoots through Jessica in order to kill Brockie who is using her as a shield. By shooting Jessica Griff "kills" the unfeminine woman. In the final sequence of the film, Jessica, recovered from her gunshot wound and realizing her love for Griff, is forced to run after Griff as he rides out of town; she now wears a white dress rather than her customary black slacks. The high angle crane shot makes Jessica look particularly small as she runs after Griff on the broad main street and jumps on the back of his wagon (figure 25). The ending is in stark contrast to Jessica's first appearance in the film when she leads--clad in black on a white horse--her forty men down a hill (figure 26).



Figure 25: The closing scene from Twentieth Century-Fox's Forty Guns where Jessica (Stanwyck) is dressed in a white dress and humbly has to run after Griff (Sullivan).



Figure 26: The opening scene from Forty Guns where Jessica is clad in black on a white horse and leading a posse of forty men.

The image of woman as villain in Westerns was not very common, either before or after the 1950s. Villainous women are often found in B Westerns, which include Stanwyck's films The Maverick Queen and Forty Guns (Loy 279). The women Stanwyck played in these films live either at the boundaries or outside of society (often literally and figuratively). In The Maverick Queen Stanwyck plays Kit Banion, the owner of a saloon-hotel who works with a notorious outlaw gang (the Wild Bunch) headed by Butch Cassidy. Sundance (Scott Brady), a member of the gang, considers Kit as his lover, but she thinks differently. She falls instead for Jeff Young (Barry Sullivan), an undercover detective who poses as an ex-convict wanting to join Butch's gang. When Jeff's real identity is revealed, Kit helps Jeff escape from the gang and is fatally wounded when she shields him from gunfire. She dies in his arms when the gang is taken prisoner by US Marshals. Like Jessica Drummond, Kit does not fit the traditional image of woman as wife, but is an independent, assertive woman who is making her own way in the world. Kit tells Jeff that she is snubbed by the women in town and that they do not acknowledge her presence but talk about her behind her back. Jeff observes that she is "a big wheel in this town" and that this is "unusual for a lady." When Jeff asks Kit why she never married, Kit replies that marriage "is not for people in our business [stealing mavericks with a gang of outlaws]," after explaining that "you only leave the Wild Bunch feet first." It is therefore impossible for Kit, as a powerful woman in a gang of male outlaws, to marry someone outside the gang as that would mean her death. At the end of the film, however, Kit is killed and in cinematic terms punished for transgressing gender and patriarchal boundaries.

Stanwyck's characters are different from "proper" women. In Forty Guns, Jessica has her ranch far away from town and she and her male posse only come into town to cause trouble. Forty Guns' theme song "Woman with a Whip" (the film's original title) underscores Jessica's image as

[. . .] a woman that all men desire / But [. . .] no man can tame her.

But the song also foreshadows the film's ending, which returns the woman to her proper place:

But if someone could break her / [. . .] You may find that the Woman with the Whip / Is only a woman after all."

The townswomen (or "proper" women) usually disapprove of the transgressive behaviour of Stanwyck's characters and the way they defy feminine conventions. Being ostracized by "proper" women is a recurring trait in Stanwyck's films throughout her career. In Baby Face, for example, Lily Powers's (Stanwyck) female colleagues talk behind her back about her affairs with the various bank managers. But her friend, the cobbler Cragg (Alphonse

Ethier), advises her about the teachings of Friedrich Nietzsche, suggesting: “A woman--young, beautiful [. . .]--can get anything she wants in the world! Because you have a power over men!” Lily lives by this motto, but it is not an appropriate way to behave for a woman.³⁰ Similarly, in All I Desire Naomi Murdoch (Stanwyck) is ostracized by the women in her town because she is an actress (unknown to the townspeople she is actually a burlesque performer--an even lower form of entertainer), and because she supposedly had an extramarital affair, leaving her husband and children to pursue a stage career. In California Stanwyck’s character Lily Bishop is thrown out of a hotel by a group of women because of “wickedness and mortal sin” and because “cards ain’t the only thing she cheats at.” Later, after Lily arrives in California she becomes the owner of a saloon where she sings about its/her reputation and sets herself off against “proper” women: the song suggests that men come to her saloon to get away from their wives.³¹

Another aspect that differentiated Stanwyck’s characters from other women in Westerns was their physicality. Women in Westerns often stayed away from physical activity. Studio biographies and articles regularly stated that Stanwyck was an “enthusiastic sportswoman” who loved “being physically active” both on- and off-screen.³² Stanwyck was also known for doing most of her own stunts in these films.³³ She said she did not need “a double in Westerns--I can do my own stunts.”³⁴ As early as 1946, an article in Movieland stated that using a stunt double was “not in line with Barbara’s philosophy that you really have to put your heart and soul into a part [. . .]” (Shallin 57). Stanwyck’s ability and willingness to be physically active in her roles made her a suitable actress for the Western. Similarly, Stanwyck’s onscreen unfeminine image was reinforced by her off-screen unfeminine image. As described in chapter three, fan magazines and publicity biographies often stated that Stanwyck was only briefly aligned with conventional and domestic conceptions of femininity during her marriage to Taylor. The emphasis in Stanwyck’s image on her career rather than her family life suggested a resistance to conventional femininity. Articles and biographies emphasized that Stanwyck’s “whole field of interest [. . .] lies in her career” and that she was “interested solely in her acting job and in doing that well” (“Story behind” 25).³⁵ This unfeminine theme is an element that, as demonstrated throughout the thesis, can be found all through Stanwyck’s career, particularly in her onscreen image but also in her off-screen image.

In The Maverick Queen, Forty Guns, and Cattle Queen of Montana Stanwyck was co-starred with male actors from the genre’s second tier: Barry Sullivan and Ronald Reagan. Stanwyck was the strongest of the three stars, both in terms of box-office value and image. She was not paired with the genre’s higher-calibre male stars such as John Wayne or James Stewart which would, arguably, have influenced the strength and toughness of Stanwyck’s characters. The high-calibre male stars were making films at the bigger studios, whereas Stanwyck’s films

were produced by minor studios such as RKO, Regal (Globe), and Republic. This is not to say that Sullivan or Reagan were bad actors and that Stanwyck's characters only gained strength because of weak male characters (although it does work to her advantage), but to point to the production differences between films in the genre. In B Westerns female characters had more opportunities to be tough, independent, and villainous, and the B's were produced at the smaller studios. Stanwyck's image as a strong, independent woman was useful for her Western characters. In an article about Forty Guns Tony Williams argues that a "crucial factor in this process [of destabilizing former traditions] is the presence of Barbara Stanwyck. [. . .] Stanwyck's presence in this film [. . .] presented viewers with a pre-feminist icon of a mature woman [. . .]."

In 1973 Stanwyck was the first woman to be inducted in the "Hall of Fame of Great Western Performers" at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. There are currently only a handful of women inducted ("Great Western Performers"). This is obviously because the criteria for nomination state that the nominee must have made "significant contributions [. . .] to the perpetuation of the Western film, television, radio, or theatrical" which must include at least five performances in one or more categories ("Great Western Performers"). Since the Western is a masculine genre it is not surprising that so few women fulfil the criteria.

Conclusion

In this chapter I revealed and explained the reasons for Stanwyck's fading film career in the 1950s and 1960s. Firstly, changes in the film industry led to the production of fewer films. This meant that there were fewer roles for stars which resulted in less exposure and attention. Secondly, the stars of Stanwyck's generation were now past the age of forty and thus classified as "old." Good roles for mature actresses were few and many female stars of this cohort were forced into early retirement or to performances in B films. Stanwyck extended her career in particular through her performances in (B) Westerns in the 1950s.

Surprisingly, Stanwyck was promoted as a role model for mature women. She demonstrated that being over forty did not mean that women could not be attractive. The model of womanhood she offered fans, however, fitted with her image: women should act, dress, and be natural. This was of course an attractive model of womanhood, because it was easy for female audiences to imitate. As in the 1930s, naturalness was foregrounded in Stanwyck's image, however it was no longer associated with the lower-class but with simplicity. Nonetheless, the model of woman Stanwyck offered did not fit conventional models of femininity, but, again, this matched with her unfeminine roles in (particularly) Westerns and in other films.

Because ageing was foregrounded in Stanwyck's image (unlike in most other stars' images), I then examined how this was used in various production trends. Although many films did draw attention to Stanwyck's maturity (either through her character, through other characters, through the narrative, or through the use of wigs in colour films), they used Stanwyck's ageing as a sign of wisdom, and rarely turned her into a "harridan." I suggested that admitting to her age set Stanwyck apart from other stars and this benefitted her chances of work.

Finally, I researched Stanwyck's performances in the Western, which played an integral part in her image at the end of her career as well as in recent memorializations. Stanwyck was one of the few regular leading female stars of Westerns. Although Westerns rarely had female protagonists and often even a limited number of female characters, Stanwyck's characters in this genre fitted her earlier performances and her image: they were tough, no-nonsense, wise-cracking women who could hold their own in a masculine world. I showed that the images of women Stanwyck offered in her Westerns was different from the standard images of women in the Western. Stanwyck's women were active and powerful rather than passive and silent. They fitted in the world of the Western, but, like other Stanwyck characters that transgressed gender boundaries, they were always reduced to "proper" women, or punished with death in the end. These onscreen unfeminine women fitted with Stanwyck's off-screen image. Although she was considered a role model for mature women, she was not a conventional feminine role model. Similarly, Stanwyck's interest in this masculine genre and the emphasis on her career rather than her family, suggested she did not adhere to conventional notions of femininity.

Therefore, Stanwyck's image at end of her film career more or less mirrored her image at the beginning of her career; traits of natural, undomestic, and unfeminine elements were foregrounded in her image, albeit in a different way. In the following chapter I will examine whether this image transferred from feature film to television when Stanwyck migrated to the small screen in the early 1960s. Stanwyck was one of several veteran film stars who made the transition from film to television in the late 1950s and who then went on to make a career in the medium. Rather than examining Stanwyck's entire television career, I will focus on particularly high-profile activities. Therefore, I concentrate on Stanwyck's anthology series The Barbara Stanwyck Show and her Western series The Big Valley. I will focus particularly on the production of The Barbara Stanwyck Show and on Stanwyck's performances as hostess of the series and her roles in the teleplays. I will examine Stanwyck's character and her place in The Big Valley to determine whether and how the series used Stanwyck's image as a Western performer.

Chapter 5

Stanwyck on Television in the 1960s

“Why did I want to get into television? Simple, I wasn’t working and I wanted to work. What else is there for me to do? I have no hobbies” (“Stanwyck, the Frustrated Stuntwoman” 18).

As established in the previous chapter, Stanwyck’s film career declined in the late 1950s. While film production decreased, the medium of television expanded rapidly in the United States. Although not all film stars were equally interested in exploring television, veteran stars in particular embraced the new medium as a means of reviving their careers (Plotnik 18). This was also the case for Stanwyck. After guest-performances on various series such as Zane Grey Theater and The Jack Benny Show (1950-1965), Stanwyck obtained her own anthology series The Barbara Stanwyck Show in 1960. The series lasted only one season, but Stanwyck remained in television, making only two more feature films before her cinema career ended with The Night Walker (d. William Castle, US, 1964). Stanwyck’s film image as a strong and independent frontier woman was used in Western television series such as Rawhide and Wagon Train. The Western was a popular television genre until the late 1960s, and in 1965 Stanwyck acquired her own Western television series: The Big Valley. After The Big Valley, Stanwyck’s performances on television became scarce. In the early 1970s she played in three made-for-television films that were shocker-suspense movies, and in 1983 Stanwyck starred in the mini-series The Thorn Birds, for which she won an Emmy Award. After guest-appearances in the soap opera Dynasty (1981-1989), Stanwyck became a regular cast member of the series’ spin-off The Colbys (1985-1987), which was reportedly the most expensive soap-opera ever made (Ang 85). However, this series was cancelled after two seasons and it remained Stanwyck’s final television performance.

Because Stanwyck’s career was fading, less publicity and promotional materials were generated about Stanwyck in this period. Similarly, because she was now a single, mature film star, and therefore apparently a less interesting topic for fan magazines, publicity focused on Stanwyck’s career. Thus, unlike the previous chapters, this chapter highlights Stanwyck’s onscreen image. I focus here on Stanwyck’s transition from film to television and in particular how her film image was used in her television appearances. The first section considers the rise of television broadcasting in the 1950s and I explain how and why film stars embraced (or resisted) television. I then go on to examine how The Barbara Stanwyck Show made use of Stanwyck’s film images. This is followed by a discussion of Stanwyck’s role in the highly

successful Western family drama series The Big Valley. I end the chapter with a brief look at Stanwyck's final feature film, The Night Walker, which reunited Stanwyck and Robert Taylor at the end of their careers.

The decline of the film industry and the rise of television

Although television is often identified as the main cause for the decline of the studio system, it did not become a serious competitor for the film industry until the mid-1950s (Balio, "Introduction" 3). As early as the 1940s, film studios were interested in producing television, but radio networks influenced television's development more because television adapted radio's economic practices (e.g. programme sponsoring) and programme forms (Anderson, "Television" 423; Balio, "Introduction" 17). Between 1948 and 1952 television broadcasting grew immensely. The number of stations rose from 50 in 1948 to 108 in 1952 (Anderson, "Television" 434). Broadcasting was, however, dominated by the established networks NBC (National Broadcasting Company) and CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System), and it was difficult for Hollywood's larger studios to involve themselves in television broadcasting. As Douglas Gomery notes, the Paramount decrees not only dismantled the Hollywood film industry, they also "guaranteed that the majors would not secure a significant place in the ownership of U.S. television networks and stations" ("Failed" 227). Hollywood studios initially wanted to participate in broadcasting through "theater television," where "televised events could be projected on a theatre screen and admission charged [. . .]" (White 150; Hilmes 120-123). This form of broadcasting failed, mainly because in the early 1950s television became increasingly geared towards the family home (Anderson, "Television" 435).

In the late 1940s television borrowed radio practices for its broadcasting system, including live performances (Kepley 41). Live television gave the networks control over national broadcasting because stations had to receive the live feeds from the networks according to a specific schedule, while filmed programmes could be broadcast at any time. The networks emulated live entertainment forms rather than Hollywood's canned entertainments and insisted that live television was "creatively superior to filmed fare" and thus more prestigious (Wasko, "Hollywood and Television" 135). Until the mid-1950s most programmes were broadcast live from New York City, but some independent Hollywood producers, such as Hal Roach and William "Hopalong Cassidy" Boyd, were able to license filmed programming (most notably old theatrical serials and shorts) to networks through syndication arrangements (Anderson, "Television" 436; Hilmes 150-151). Because networks could not offer a full day of programming, they supplemented their live programming with pre-recorded shows (telefilms) and, from 1955 onwards, "old" feature films (Kepley 53; Balio, "Introduction" 31). In 1955 RKO was the first major studio to sell its pre-1948 films, and network television became a

secondary market for Hollywood films (Lafferty 240-241). However, the outright selling of film libraries for television was retrospectively viewed as a significant economic misstep, as it became more profitable to lease films for television showing on time-limited contracts (Hilmes 183). Many independent producers flocked to television when the medium was in need for programmes for their all-day schedules. Independent telefilm producers rented backlots and soundstages (which were vacant because of the decline in feature film production) from film studios (Boddy, *Fifties* 70). From the mid-1950s the major studios actively engaged in television production. The film industry provided two products: their libraries of existing films and original telefilms (Boddy, "Studios" 24). In 1956 almost three thousand features entered television distribution--nearly three-thirds the amount of all previous years (Lafferty 241-242). Film studios had all the facilities to record telefilms which by 1956 had largely replaced live broadcasting (Boddy, "Studios" 29). According to television scholar William Boddy, the growing potential profits of telefilms' syndication brought rapid expansion of the major studios in the telefilm market ("Studios" 33). By the 1960s Hollywood film studios produced forty percent of all network programmes (Balio, "Introduction" 36). Because of the need for continued television production, it became more economic to produce cast-driven series that did not depend on a different guest-star and story each week, but was based on a regular cast of characters. With the rise of television and the decline of standardized film production, studios shifted to producing profitable standardized television programmes for the major networks (Anderson, "Hollywood" 83).

As feature film production decreased many film stars turned to television. For some stars (e.g. Claudette Colbert), television was just a sideline in their careers, for others such as Stanwyck it became a lifeline and a way to extend a career. Certain stars initially avoided television appearances at all costs--for example Marlene Dietrich, Olivia de Havilland, Clark Gable, and Katharine Hepburn. Film stars avoided television for a myriad of reasons. Many thought television was beneath the stature of a feature film star, and because television had a limited reach until 1950, many stars believed that this limited their exposure, while others thought that television could create overexposure if a star was to be featured in a weekly series (Becker 27-30). From 1955 onward there was a significant rise in the number of television programmes featuring Hollywood stars in major roles (Plotnik 18, 29). When the major studios started to produce programmes for television in 1953, many of their contract stars were able to make star appearances on television to plug their latest films, as they had previously done on radio (Mann, "Spectacularization" 47). However, the most common place for film stars to appear on television was in anthology dramas. Anthology dramas were "self-contained plays with a different cast of characters each week" and critics regarded them as prestige programmes

(Becker 41). Because of the programmes' prestige, stars were interested in performing in these dramas. Major stars could make a guest appearance and not lose any of their stature while performing on the small screen. Hollywood stars came to rely on television for exposure and television relied on Hollywood's star names to sell its programmes. Hollywood stars represented the glamour of the past decades through the recycling of their images in the new television format. Film stars could now be admired within audiences' own homes. Major stars (e.g. Loretta Young, Joan Blondell, Robert Montgomery, and Dick Powell) were hosting their own shows, appearing in series, or guest-starring in dramas.

Talent agencies played an important role in introducing film stars to television. As the film studios' power decreased in the early 1950s, talent agencies' power increased (Mann, Hollywood 8). When more stars freelanced in the late 1940s, they depended on agents for work. Because studios no longer managed stars, talent agents took over this role. Stars became the most important way to finance an individual film and talent agencies quickly capitalized on this situation (Bruck 88). MCA was the most powerful talent agency during the 1950s. It became the most substantial force in presenting film stars on television, together with its subsidiary television production company Revue Productions. The agency moved into television production when many of its film star clients were out of work in the late 1940s. By the end of the 1950s, Revue Productions supplied more than one-third of the programmes on prime-time television (Balio, "Introduction" 34). MCA was able to set-up most of its clients in television through (guest) performances on MCA's own shows (e.g. Alfred Hitchcock Presents [1955-1962] and General Electric Theater [1953-1962]), giving them a share in the profits of the programmes (Balio, "Introduction" 34). In 1962, after an antitrust suit, MCA was forced to divorce its talent agency business from its production business and it lost its powerful place as a talent agency (Bruck 194). The second most important talent agency in Hollywood, the William Morris Agency, also ventured into television, but it did not own a television company. It packaged programmes and sold them to the networks and ownership of the programmes stayed with the particular production company, not with the agency. The William Morris Agency packaged for example The Barbara Stanwyck Show, Four Star Playhouse (1952-1956), and the Ann Sothern Show (1958-1961) (Becker 48). In 1960 MCA and the William Morris Agency had a financial interest in sixty percent of the total television prime-time line-up (Becker 48). Both agencies had a complete stable of actors, writers, and directors that could be packaged for different programmes. As the Hollywood studios did before them, the agencies used the stars they had under contract as bargaining tools to receive sponsorship for their programmes.

Many stars formed their own television production companies, supported by their agencies, to keep creative control over their image and the shows they performed in, and to

benefit from tax laws. The most notable and profitable star-owned company was Four Star Productions (from 1958 Four Star Television) created by Dick Powell, Charles Boyer, and David Niven (Ida Lupino was the fourth star but she never had ownership in the company) (Rose 216). Four Star Productions was partnered with the William Morris Agency. The William Morris Agency could compete with MCA by working with clients' production companies, and as such the William Morris Agency could avoid accusations of conflicted interests because it did not produce the shows in which its stars appeared. Stars could thus maintain more control over their images and careers when the power of the film studios decreased and the medium of television expanded and was in need of stars.

Before Stanwyck starred in her own show, she first made guest-star appearances on television. Her first performance was on The Jack Benny Show in 1952. According to Stanwyck's biographies, Jack Benny and his wife Mary Livingston were good friends of Stanwyck and Taylor, and Stanwyck had often made guest-appearances on Benny's radio programme.¹ In 1955 she substituted twice for Loretta Young as the hostess of Young's anthology programme in the episodes "The Waiting Game" and "My Uncle O'Moore." In the 1950s Stanwyck performed in dramas and comedies on such programs as Alcoa Theatre (1957-1960) and Ford Theatre (1952-1957). From 1958 Stanwyck's guest appearances on television Western series increased notably (see appendix A). She had finished (what would be her final) two Western feature films in 1957 and her film image of a strong, tough, independent, and resourceful Western heroine could be used in popular television Westerns. Since feature film roles were scarce, Stanwyck embraced the possibility to work in television and to continue her work and career in that medium. And when there were no suitable projects at hand, Stanwyck and her agents created one.

The Barbara Stanwyck Show

According to the Los Angeles Examiner, Stanwyck formed her own production company to produce an anthology series as early as 1956.² Trade magazine Variety, however, stated that Stanwyck formed a corporation for the same reason in 1958 ("Stanwyck Series" 31). I have not been able to find details about when exactly and how Stanwyck's corporation was established, but the William H. Wright papers in the Margaret Herrick Library show that Stanwyck's corporation Barwyck existed in 1959 and was created to produce The Barbara Stanwyck Show. At this time, Stanwyck had signed a seven-year contract with NBC for "a series of filmed dramatic shows" that was supposed to start "early fall [1959]."³ Stanwyck's Barwyck and producer Louis Edelman's production company Louis F. Edelman's T.V. Productions signed a joint venture agreement to produce Stanwyck's show, under the name E.S.W. [Edelman. Stanwyck. Wright.] Productions. Edelman's corporation had "complete

creative and production controls,” but agreed “to consult closely with Barwyck.” Barwyck on the other hand “shall negotiate for and shall select literary material to be used as the basis for the programs.” This suggests that Stanwyck had story approval for her series, as she had for (most of) her films. Barwyck seems to have predominantly been created for tax purposes. Barwyck’s only tasks were to select stories and “furnish [a] production secretary” for which the company was paid \$1,000 per programme. Barwyck would receive 57.1 per cent of the profits and Edelman’s corporation would receive 42.9 per cent.⁴ Stanwyck was then hired by E.S.W. Productions to star in and host the show: she received \$1,500 per programme as host, and if she starred in and hosted a programme she received \$5,000. In comparison, Edelman received \$750 per programme as the show’s producer. In addition Stanwyck received compensation for repeats on national networks (up to \$2,000 per programme) and on such exhibition means as subscription television (up to \$5,000 per programme). Stanwyck also had make-up man and hairdresser approval, received “sole star credit” both at the beginning and the end of the programme and no other performers would receive similar credit.⁵ The contract therefore shows the importance of Stanwyck for the show, and the special conditions reflect her star status.

The hostess

It was not until the fall of 1960 that The Barbara Stanwyck Show actually appeared on NBC. Stanwyck hosted thirty-six episodes and featured in thirty-two of the teleplays in a starring role. The anthology series followed the format of The Loretta Young Show (1953-1961, also packaged by the William Morris Agency) and The DuPont Show with June Allyson (1959-1961). The show opened with an introduction by Stanwyck, the Hollywood star, who directly addressed the audience. Stanwyck said about these introductions that “playing the role of hostess every week was fine for Loretta Young. [. . .] I couldn’t stand it. Posing in the doorway in some overly-formal drawing gown was ridiculous for me.”⁶ Except during a brief period in the 1940s, Stanwyck had never been associated with glamour, but rather with connotations of natural (i.e. lack of glamour), ordinary, and lower-class (see chapter one). The introduction was followed by a half-hour, self-contained, female-centred play. As Denise Mann argues, the film image that had been created in the 1930s and 1940s for many of these stars/hosts was well-known with television audiences and invoked the glamorous past of these stars (“Spectacularization” 53-55). Anthology hosts were presented as “themselves” (i.e. the Hollywood star) but these identities had to be matched with the cultural standing of the anthology genre and the nature of the stories being told. The Loretta Young Show is a good example of this match. In the introductions Young was her off-screen self, a glamorous clothes horse on a set that was touted as a replica of the star’s home (Becker 112). The plays that followed her introduction were female-centred and in line with Young’s moral and religious

outlook. For The Barbara Stanwyck Show, Stanwyck was inserted in Young's role, complete with female-centred stories and a glamorous entrance. However, Stanwyck's off-screen image was never as glamorous as Young's: ordinariness and naturalness were the most important themes in her image. Television scholar Christine Becker argues that "television viewers were encouraged to believe they could actually locate the true personality of the television star somewhere within his or her performance" (70). Ordinariness was more fundamental to small screen performance than to film performance because television performers were encouraged to create an intimate connection between themselves and their audience (Mann, "Spectacularization" 48). Stanwyck's glamorous introductions "as herself" did not fit this line of reasoning. Stanwyck was placed in the role of the glamorous hostess which contrasted with her image as natural and ordinary and as such discouraged audiences to believe they could "locate the true personality" in Stanwyck's performance.

Stanwyck's introductions seem awkward; she poses on the right side of the frame and her performance can best be described as wooden. All openings follow a similar format where Stanwyck introduces the episode, the star(s), and the sponsor. The show starts with its signatory theme music played by trumpets, as if "announcing" The Barbara Stanwyck Show. A close-up of Stanwyck's head fades in while Stanwyck turns her head from a profile view to a frontal view as the camera tracks back to slowly reveal the rest of Stanwyck's body, including a glamorous gown. A voice-over announces that the show is presented "from Hollywood" to evoke the glamour of the Hollywood film industry. The real introduction is accompanied by slow piano music and the camera tracks in towards Stanwyck who stands in a rigid model pose: one foot in front of the other, and her body in a slightly three-quarter turn toward the camera. As Stanwyck begins to speak, she moves her hands from behind her back to the front of her body, and that is the only movement she makes. She then speaks her introduction while framed in a medium shot so that the focus is on her text (figure 27).

The opening for the episode "Confession," for example, was one of the few introductions that made reference to Stanwyck's Hollywood past:

Good evening. Tonight your Gas Company Playhouse presents a melodrama in the manner of Double Indemnity, which I hope you remember as a motion picture I've appeared in some years ago. [. . .] The teleplay by Ellis St. Joseph is based on a true life murder mystery which you may recognize. [. . .] And now, in just sixty seconds, the first act of... "Confession."



Figure 27a: The opening hostess sequence from the episode “A Man’s Game” from NBC’s The Barbara Stanwyck Show starts with a track in towards Stanwyck.



Figure 27b: The camera then frames Stanwyck in a medium shot.



Figure 27c: The final shot is a close-up of Stanwyck.

Unlike hostess sequences for first-run broadcasts, various hostess closing (and occasionally opening) sequences that were used for syndication referred directly to Stanwyck the star and her off-screen life. These sequences excluded references to the show's national network sponsors (American Gas Association and Alberto-Culver Company) and to following episodes (the order of broadcasting was different for syndication). For example, the hostess closing text for the episode "Little Big Mouth" on national network noted that: "Next week we bring you a gripping story of suspense and terror entitled 'Assassin,' in which I play the victim." The closing text for this episode for syndication was completely different and referred to the content of the just-aired episode and to Stanwyck: "I like working with Indians. I'm one myself. Really. Once when I was on location in Montana, I was made an Honorary Member of the Blackfeet Tribe. It was quite a ceremony."⁷ Nonetheless, while the openings/closings for syndication were more personal, they did not change the awkwardness of Stanwyck's role as glamorous hostess.

The teleplays

There is an obvious divide between Stanwyck the hostess and Stanwyck the actress in the plays. Whereas Stanwyck did not fit the image of the glamorous hostess, she did fit the roles in the teleplays. The plays generally recycled Stanwyck's film performances. In combination with the replaying of old feature films on television, audiences could connect the television series to the films. The television series emphasized Stanwyck's "glamorous" past as a Hollywood film star. The majority of the teleplays starred Stanwyck as the lead character (hence the female-centred stories) and most stories revolved around Stanwyck as a strong-headed, independent woman. There are few exceptions to the storylines. To illustrate Stanwyck's characterization in most episodes, her character in "Triple C" was described as having an "iron will," as someone who "leans on no one and nothing," and who is "as stubborn as sin, as independent as a hog on ice and as reckless as any drunk Indian."⁸ Similarly, Stanwyck's character Little Joe (who features in three episodes) is an American import-exporter, a shrewd business woman stationed the Orient whose "heart is never quite hard enough to let her make the big killing," and who "gambles with everything except her American passport."⁹ Little Joe is a run-of-the-mill Stanwyck character: she is the tough, independent, and powerful owner of a business, but she has a soft core. According to Ella Smith, screenwriter Albert Beich and Stanwyck wanted Little Joe for a series but the show was never made. Beich said that this was "a question of economics" because anthology series were on their way out in the early 1960s as they were expensive to make (279).



Figure 28a: Stanwyck as Chris in the episode “A Man’s Game” from NBC’s The Barbara Stanwyck Show wearing her sheriff’s attire.



Figure 28b: Stanwyck as Chris at the end of the episode “A Man’s Game” where she wears “proper” feminine clothes.

Certain episodes gave Stanwyck the opportunity to be physically active and evoked Stanwyck's 1950s action and Western films. For example, Stanwyck played a deputy sheriff cuffed to a killer with a gun in "The Key to the Killer," and a female saloon-hotel-owner-turned-sheriff in "A Man's Game." The latter is a spoof Western which pokes fun at Stanwyck's tough, independent Western women. Stanwyck plays Chris, the saloon-hotel keeper who becomes the town sheriff when no men dare to take the job. When Chris emerges as the sheriff, she is properly dressed according to the script: "She is wearing dungarees, boots, a man's shirt and vest with the sheriff's star pinned on it. On top of this she is toting two guns in a gunbelt. She looks adorable" (figure 28). Stanwyck's dry narrating enhances the image: "How do you like that outfit? That's how all lady sheriffs dressed in those days." According to the final script (the speech is slightly altered in the broadcasted episode but the message is the same) one of the male townspeople sees her and remarks: "A lady sheriff. We'll be the laughing stock of the West. Besides it ain't womanly." Chris then rides off, according to the narrating, "to take a ju-jitsu lesson from the Japanese cook at the B-Bar." At the decisive moment in the plot, when Chris has to demonstrate her authority as sheriff, Stanwyck narrates: "Will she pull the trigger? Is she a big tough Sheriff, or just a woman, after all?" The latter part of the final sentence is a direct quotation from the title song from Stanwyck's film Forty Guns (see chapter four). Chris turns out to be "just a woman after all" when she cannot prove her authority and has to be saved by her boyfriend. The teleplay ends similarly to Forty Guns: Chris resigns as sheriff and replaces her dungarees with more feminine attire (figure 28).¹⁰

The majority of the episodes, however, were dramas that revolved around the family and can be compared to the popular women's picture of the 1940s and Stanwyck's mature woman dramas of the 1950s. In these teleplays Stanwyck played powerful business women or independent mothers who had problems maintaining a family life. "House in Order" is an example of this. The episode was written by women's picture writer Catherine Turney. Stanwyck plays Elizabeth Mowry who is faced with heart surgery (unknown to her family) and is advised by her physician to "put her house in order" before the surgery. Her uncommunicative family, however, is falling apart and Elizabeth has a short time to get the family together again. Elizabeth is the wife of a businessman (Sheppard Strudwick) and is engaged in various charity committees. Her husband accuses Elizabeth of being a bad mother because she is scarcely home to keep an eye on their teenage daughter (Yvonne Craig). Both her husband and her daughter blame Elizabeth for their shattered family and their quarrels prevent Elizabeth to announce that she needs surgery. However, when Elizabeth's husband and daughter learn that Elizabeth has gone to the hospital for her surgery without telling them, their differences are quickly solved and the family becomes a unit again. The episode is principally

set in the domestic space, and the obstacles that Elizabeth faces are all psychological and related to the family (she is predominantly accused of being a bad mother by various characters) and as such aimed at female viewers. These episodes let critics and reviewers claim that the series was a soap opera (“Barbara Stanwyck Show” 31).

Although the self-contained plays gave Stanwyck the opportunity to play a variety of roles and to maintain her film image as a tough, smart, independent woman, the glamorous format of the show did not fit with her image as an unglamorous star and the result was therefore a strange mesh of Stanwyck’s image and standard television format. The show did not make it into any Nielsen ratings published in Variety, suggesting it was not one of the most popular shows. Nevertheless, Stanwyck won an Emmy Award for Best Actress in a Series in 1961 for The Barbara Stanwyck Show. After the first season the show barely broke even, which did not benefit its prospects.¹¹ The show was dropped after one season (as was Stanwyck’s contract with NBC), at a time when a large number of female anthology programmes were cancelled (e.g. The DuPont Show with June Allyson, The Loretta Young Show, and the Ann Sothorn Show). This was a difficult time for all anthology programmes, but particularly for shows hosted by female stars. The majority of anthology hosts were male and Becker argues that this was due primarily because of a cultural bias toward men “as more authoritative figures than women” and because of the “association of female broadcast performers with the soap opera, a form scorned for its superficiality and commercialism” (115). Anthology programmes had an authoritative and culturally prestigious image which could possibly be damaged by associating them with the commercial form of the soap opera. In its review of The Barbara Stanwyck Show, Variety called the program “a half hour of bedtime soap opera” which had “nothing to attract anybody but the dames who have survived afternoon tv with a desire for more glycerine” (sic) and put it on par with The Loretta Young Show--a “soap operatic series” (“Barbara Stanwyck Show” 31; “Loretta” 30). The hostesses of these anthology series generally displayed glamorous gowns, becoming models (or objects to-be-looked-at) which seemed as important as the plays--the end credits for The Barbara Stanwyck Show single out the gowns’ designer, Werlé, in a single credit title. Male hosts were less glamorous and less formally dressed. Ronald Reagan, for example, the host of General Electric Theater, was usually dressed in a simple suit. Many of the cancelled anthology programmes were replaced by more popular television genres such as action/adventure series (“Mass Farewell” 102). Stanwyck complained:

I don’t know who ‘they’ are, but they’ve decreed no more women on television. The only woman who will be left next year is Donna Reed [from the sitcom The Donna Reed Show (1958-1966)]. The rest of us have been dropped [. . .]. And we all had good ratings.... ‘They’ want action shows and have a theory that women can’t do action (qtd. in E. Smith 280).

Four years later, however, Stanwyck did get her action series.

The Big Valley

During the 1950s and most of the 1960s the television Western dominated adventure-type network programming (MacDonald 12). In the early television years the Western was a largely juvenile phenomenon and it was not until the mid- and late 1950s that it was geared towards adults. From then on, the television Western was the most popular genre on television until the late 1960s (“‘Gunsmoke’ Wins” 27). By the 1970s and 1980s the genre ceased to exist on television. The original stars of television Westerns were stars from the B Western features such as Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, and Hopalong Cassidy. The made-for-television Westerns that were developed from 1949 onward were created especially with children in mind. The heroes in these programmes were “flawless types who blended strength and savvy to overcome injustice” (MacDonald 27). They had no personal vices and were gallant around women. They set an example and offered moral guidelines for juvenile audiences. The post-1955 adult Western was a cowboy-action programme designed for adults and scheduled during prime-time. These series differed from the juvenile Western in the more developed characterization of the characters and the more psychologically complicated narratives (Buxton 30). The change from the juvenile Western to the adult Western mimicked the change from the classical feature film Western to the adult feature film Western. The hero in the adult television Western was still brave and tough, but the characters were more developed and believable. The narrative was geared towards “dramatic conflict, human insight, [showing] outdoor beauty, and subtle moralization” (MacDonald 50). The adult Western premiered in September 1955 with the series Gunsmoke (1955-1975), Frontier (1955-1956), and The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp (1955-1961) (Spielman 14). Of these, Gunsmoke had the longest run on television. According to J. Fred MacDonald, the adult Western had a formulaic nature: “the forces of law and order invariably were victorious; continuing characters did not die; and stories carried a positive message” (61).

Many popular series had a regular cast of continuing-characters, who were featured in (nearly) every episode with each episode focussing on one or two cast members. Most of these characters were male. The Western is a stereotypical masculine genre and even the television series had very few female leading ladies. The notable exception is Gail Davis as Annie Oakley, in the show with the same name, who was the first woman to star in her own Western series (Bratton 7).¹² David Dortort, the producer of the popular series Bonanza (1959-1973), avoided the presence of a female and stated that “[w]e do not have any Moms built into our show---or for that matter, any women. We are, as it were, anti-Momism” (qtd. in Buxton 37-38). Very few Western heroes had a wife and there is hardly any evidence of domesticity in the lives of the heroes. This changed in the mid-1960s, however, when the popularity of the television Western

was under threat. Chronic popular criticism of the Western's violence caused de-emphasis on violence in a naturally aggressive genre (Buxton 31). The Western became more domesticated, with more series focusing upon family life. Many of the families had sprawling cattle or land empires and were "[f]aced with a diversity of challenges to life, property, and civilized standards" when they "came together weekly to fight for their frontier existences" (MacDonald 94). This domestic variant of the television Western, exemplified by The High Chaparral (1967-1971), Bonanza, Gunsmoke (which successfully made the transition to the domestic Western), and The Virginian (1962-1971), was the only type to survive in the late 1960s.

The domestic Western is best characterized by the series The Big Valley, in which Stanwyck starred. The Big Valley was one of the many new Western series that premiered in the 1965-1966 season ("Rebirth" 23). The series was created with Stanwyck in mind, after her anthology series ended in 1961 ("TV-Radio" 24). According to an interview with Stanwyck in the Los Angeles Times in 1965, Stanwyck's role (as matriarch of the Barkley family) was initially more "two-fisted," but "Madison Avenue was leery of women in westerns" (sic).¹³ Indeed, many television series (not just Westerns) in the 1960s focused on family life but often these families were missing a mother. Series as My Three Sons (1960-1972), Family Affair (1966-1971), and Bonanza centred on family life but lacked a mother figure.¹⁴ The Big Valley could not be sold to broadcasting companies and the property was sold to Levy-Gardner-Laven Productions instead. They made a deal with Four Star Television and after toning down Stanwyck's character, the series was sold to ABC for the 1965-1966 season.¹⁵

The Big Valley was a continuing-character series: it had a cast of characters that hardly changed over the series' lifespan. Film stars with a blossoming career on the big screen steered away from ongoing series because of time investment, potential over-exposure, and character stereotyping endemic to the series' format (Becker 146). In the late 1950s Stanwyck's film career had all but ended. Stanwyck herself claimed she would "keep on working until I'm ninety," but fewer film roles for stars of her age made it difficult to secure work (Tildesley 75). There was work, however, in television and Stanwyck made many guest appearances on television shows such as the General Electric Theater, The Dick Powell Show (1961-1963), and The Untouchables. In the latter part of her feature film career in the late 1950s, Stanwyck had played strong, independent women in Westerns and it was publicly known that Stanwyck was lobbying to perform in a Western series because of her personal interest in the genre (see chapter four).¹⁶ Since Stanwyck was no longer tied to feature films and because television (unlike the film industry) gave her the opportunity to work she was able to commit to an ongoing series.

Domesticity in The Big Valley

The Big Valley was one of the most popular Westerns on television in the late 1960s and lasted for four seasons, by which time the television Western virtually had ceased to exist (“Nat’l Nielsen” 24; MacDonald 95). Set in the San Joaquin Valley in the 1870s, The Big Valley detailed the life of the Barkley family: mother Victoria (Stanwyck), her three sons and teenage daughter (there was initially a fourth son, Eugene, who was away at college but the character was dropped after the first season). Victoria Barkley is the strong-willed matriarch of the Barkley family and owner of a large cattle ranch. Her oldest son Jarrod (Richard Long) is an attorney, her second son Nick (Peter Breck) is a ranch foreman, and her teenage daughter Audra (Linda Evans) is simply waiting to get married. In the first episodes of the series Victoria adopts her late husband’s illegitimate son Heath (Lee Majors) into her family. This was a major event in a television series because the series acknowledged that Victoria’s husband had been unfaithful to her (the family is thus not a perfect family) and there is even an illegitimate son to prove it. Keeping within the boundaries of the domestic Western, Victoria and the Barkley children accept Heath into the family, thereby preserving family unity, but only after a number of episodes that highlight the disrupted family relations. Only the first episodes of the series focus on the absence of the father, his legacy, and his illegitimate son who has to find a place in the family. The series can be seen as a hybrid of the Western and the soap opera in its attempts to maximise audience numbers (Buxton 31). With the highly unusual scenario of a ranch empire run by a woman, The Big Valley is one of the very few television Westerns that focused on an authoritative woman played by a former film star. With a female lead character (two including Audra) rather than exclusively male characters, The Big Valley was also directed at women. Besides the various different (and handsome) male characters, the series offered female viewers images of a beautiful ranch decorated with Victorian furnishings and expensive gowns and dresses worn by Victoria and Audra. This alone set both Stanwyck and the series apart from other Westerns at the time.

The plotlines of most episodes involve the family working together to overcome threats, not just in their own interests, but also to demonstrate the role of law. The Barkleys call upon each other when one of them is in trouble and often the whole family is needed to put things straight. With the threats vanquished, episodes end with a scene in which the family is present in the reception room in the Barkley house, which emphasizes the importance of the home and family in the series. The family unit always triumphs and often reforms the villains rather than killing them or driving them away. The Barkleys serve as mediators in these conflicts and problems are solved through constant negotiation rather than violence. The Big Valley was similar to Bonanza as both series featured lone parents who gave advice and guidance to their

grown children and who occasionally had an adventure of their own (Parks 140). Stanwyck, however, emphasized the differences between the two shows:

Our family is much tougher. My sons are strong. They're real men. This is not one of those 'Mother Knows Best' things. Hell, I wouldn't play one. Our family behaves like any normal family. We fight, argue, discuss things. We're not like some of the TV families [on Bonanza] today. [. . .] The woman I'm playing has plenty of battles with her boys. She's a very vital person (qtd. in E. Smith 293).

Victoria Barkley's strong will and independence were also characteristics of Stanwyck's previous (Western) characters. Stanwyck's image as the tough Western heroine of the mid-1950s could easily be carried over to television. The only difference was Stanwyck's age (by the time of The Big Valley she was nearing sixty) but in The Big Valley this only made her character more authoritative (an older woman with life experience).

Stanwyck's role

The role of the strong-willed matriarch in a domestic television Western was a significant one for Stanwyck. She stood out from the other actors because of her age, but also in the way she was presented to the audience. In the opening credits, for example, she was billed last of the Barkley family but rather than just Stanwyck's name and her character's name Stanwyck was billed as: "And starring Miss Barbara Stanwyck as Victoria Barkley" (figure 29). The title "Miss Barbara Stanwyck" was associated with Stanwyck's film career; she was one of the few stars to be billed with such a formal appellation.¹⁷ This billing reinforced her stature as a film star, by contrast with the other main actors who were still working their way up the ladder of stardom. Apart from Richard Long, these performers had also begun their careers in television. Stanwyck was also granted her own costume designer (Jack Muhs) on the show and according to the Los Angeles Times, her costumes for the first half of the first season "has set the producers back \$20,000."¹⁸ Having her own costume designer further demonstrated that Stanwyck's presence was a production value, a recognition that the series' other actors did not receive. Stanwyck's status as a star was used to sell the series and to raise production values ("The Big Valley" 44). For example, press information from ABC in 1967 noted that "Queenly Barbara Stanwyck returns as star of ABC-TV's The Big Valley," and print advertisements named Stanwyck first in the list of cast members (figure 30). Most of the other television Westerns (e.g. Bonanza and The Virginian) used lesser-known actors for their leading roles. The Big Valley was the first adult Western featuring a woman in a different role than the traditional saloon girl, school teacher or prostitute. According to Stanwyck, Victoria Barkley is "an old broad [. . .] but she combines elegance with guts."¹⁹



Figure 29: The opening credits for ABC's *The Big Valley* emphasize Stanwyck's stature because she is singled out ("And Starring"). The credit also points to Stanwyck's Hollywood past (referring to her as "Miss").

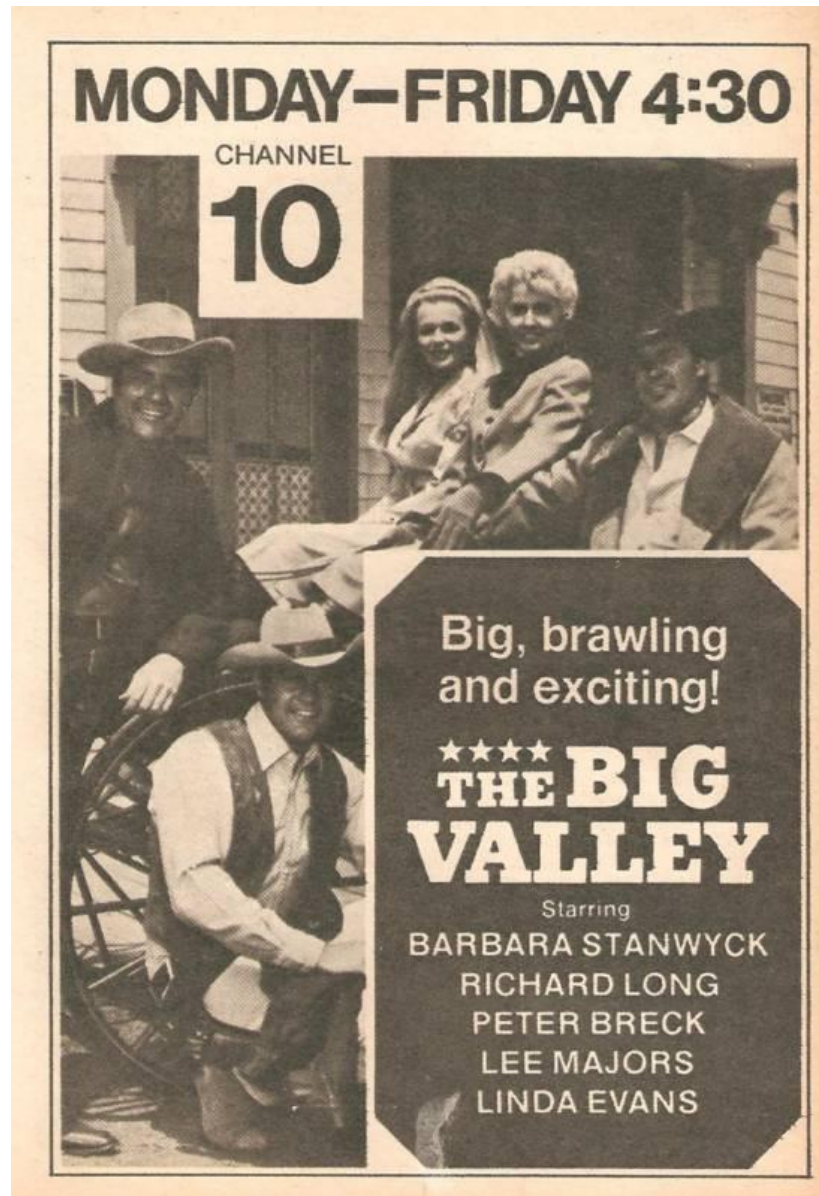


Figure 30a: An advertisement for ABC's The Big Valley names Stanwyck first in the list of cast members which suggests her name is used to sell the show.

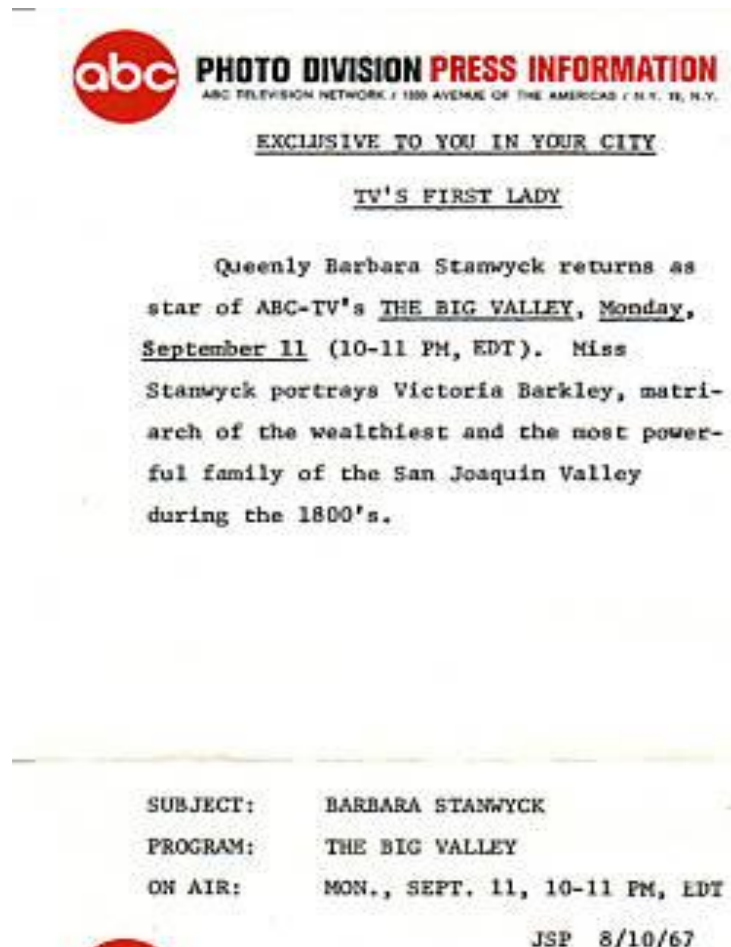


Figure 30b: A press release from ABC, emphasizing Stanwyck's star presence in The Big Valley.

Similarly, Peter Breck told Photoplay that Stanwyck “wasn’t going to play Ma Barkley for a dear old sugar-sweet Mom. She’d make Ma all woman, because *she* was” (Waterbury 96). Whereas Victoria Barkley was “all woman,” she was also unfeminine in that she (and many of Stanwyck’s other Western characters), according to Stanwyck, went “where the fellas are, with all the fun and excitement.”²⁰ Stanwyck told gossip columnist Hedda Hopper in 1965 that she wanted “to do a Western drama series in which the women did something besides cook, rock a cradle, look scared to death of Indians or run a friendly dance hall while the men did all the ridin’, shootin’, and empire building.”²¹ The Big Valley gave Stanwyck the opportunity to do this, but not until the second season.

During the first season Stanwyck had very few action scenes and rarely had an opportunity to do the “ridin’” and “shootin’.” More often than not, the women (Victoria and Audra) are sent back to the ranch when the men ride off toward the action. In the episode “Barbary Red,” for example, Nick is shanghaied to work on a ship. Jarrod suspects an old female client of his, Barbary Red, to be behind this. Jarrod, Heath, and Eugene, go into town to set a trap for Barbary Red’s gang so that they can rescue Nick. Victoria and Audra, however, stay at home to receive Barbary Red for lunch so they can extract information about Nick’s whereabouts. The women are part of Nick’s rescue, but they are rooted firmly within the domestic space and they do not join the men in physical action. Similarly, in the first season Stanwyck is more often seen “covered in crinoline” than on horseback “building an empire.” Victoria often wears full-length skirts which not only make it difficult to be physically active but also emphasize her femininity. Victoria and Audra are often situated in the house while the men are outside, whether it is on the ranch or in town. In the second episode of season one, “Forty Rifles,” Victoria spends most of the episode “seeing to dinner” or getting dressed for dinner (“Forty Rifles”). The women are thus excluded from most of the action and traditional gender roles are maintained.

However, the few episodes in season one that focus specifically on Victoria reveal her status as a smart, strong-willed, powerful woman and mother. In the episode “Teacher of Outlaws” Victoria is mistaken for a school teacher, kidnapped, and asked to teach the notorious leader of a gang of outlaws, Harry Beldon (Harold J. Stone), to read. She does this hesitantly, trying to buy time for her sons to rescue her. Victoria’s position upsets traditional gender roles when the woman is revealed to have more knowledge than the man and the man is shown to be dependent on the woman: Victoria has to teach Harry to read so that he can lead his gang to freedom across the Valley. In this case Victoria is superior to Harry, not just because she has justice on her side, but also because she has the knowledge that Harry needs (literacy and knowledge of the area). Beldon acknowledges Victoria’s position and treats her with respect--

“Been a long time since I took orders from a lady”--when he learns that she does not “scare easy” (“Teacher of Outlaws”).

Another episode, “By Force and Violence,” that focuses on Victoria demonstrates that she is “not strong enough” to get Heath out from under their overturned wagon (“By Force”). Because, as a woman, she does not have enough physical strength, she needs to use her mind to find help and manages (with the help of a rifle) to convince a runaway convict to help her save her son. In various other episodes (e.g. “The Odyssey of Jubal Tanner,” “Pursuit,” and “Boots with my Father’s Name”) Victoria plays an active role in the plot, albeit not a physically active part. In “My Son, My Son” she shoots the boy who tries to molest Audra, and in “Earthquake” she delivers a baby while she and the baby’s mother are trapped in a cellar after an earthquake. These actions are connected to Victoria’s maternal image, i.e. protecting her daughter, and delivering babies. From the second season onward, however, Victoria becomes more physically active (e.g. in “A Day of Terror,” “Ambush,” and “Alias Nelly Handley”) and is more often seen in slacks on horseback rather than in more conventional garb.

The Big Valley lasted four seasons until 1969. It was dropped because of the general decline in the popularity of Western series, but also because the series itself no longer received high audience ratings (“How They” 38). Westerns often appealed primarily to rural and “over-50 audiences” and in the late 1960s networks and programme sponsors wanted to attract young, sophisticated, urban viewers with more disposable income (“‘Gunsmoke’ Wins” 27; P. Kerr 63). Unlike Bonanza, Gunsmoke, and The Virginian, in its final years The Big Valley rarely made it into the top twenty of the monthly Nielsen ratings in Variety (e.g. “Season’s Top 40” 21; “Nat’l Nielsen” 24). But the series was popular enough with large rural audiences to maintain a spot in prime-time scheduling (“TV Nets” 28). The series also did excellent business in syndication (“‘Big Valley on Rhine” 34). Why The Big Valley was less popular than the very similar Bonanza can only be guessed. Possibly The Big Valley was too similar to Bonanza. Another reason can be that the audience preferred male heroes in the television Western since the genre is typically considered male. Although The Big Valley had three leading men, it was marketed and sold on the basis that a woman (Stanwyck) was the leading character (ABC 24; “The Big Valley” 44). The Big Valley was Stanwyck’s final appearance in a Western as well as her last performance as a continuing-character in a long-running television series. Her commitment to The Big Valley defined Stanwyck’s turn to television in that she would now be recognized as Victoria Barkley--particularly towards the end of her life.²² Stanwyck said that she “only really came into [her] own when [she] started work in the medium of television in 1965” (Perry 42). Because of Stanwyck’s association with and popularity on television, the

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences claimed she was “too television” to present the Academy Awards in 1971.²³

Harridan in a Horror Picture

From 1965 onward, Stanwyck did not have time to make films outside of her commitment to The Big Valley. In 1964 she made her final feature film, The Night Walker, which reunited her with Robert Taylor, whom she had divorced in 1950. Although the word divorce had never been seriously connected to the Stanwyck-Taylor marriage, from very early on in their relationship Stanwyck and Taylor had been subjects of occasional sniping and speculation in the media. Articles detailed the extreme differences in character between the two and the probability that this could lead to an early divorce. For example, a column by Hedda Hopper in the late 1940s described Stanwyck and Taylor as “congenial opposites.”²⁴ According to Hopper Stanwyck suffered from insomnia whereas Taylor loved to sleep, Stanwyck loved to read and hated to cook whereas Taylor loved to cook and to fly, which Stanwyck hated. An article in Screen Guide from the early 1940s entitled “Can Barbara Keep Bob Happy?” explained Stanwyck’s and Taylor’s differences in terms of their pre-cinema experiences-- Stanwyck had to “struggle hard” to become famous, while Taylor had a protected life--and the role Stanwyck played as a teacher and mentor to Taylor (she was an established star when they met) rather than a wife. Another article in Screen Guide noted that Stanwyck and Taylor hardly ever saw each other after their marriage as they were too busy with their respective careers.²⁵

Many Stanwyck biographers claim that Taylor had an affair whilst filming Quo Vadis (d. Mervyn LeRoy, US, 1951) in Italy but provide no evidence for this (Wayne, Stanwyck 127-129; DiOrio 164-165; Madsen 275-277). In December 1950, after Taylor returned from Italy, the couple released a joint statement that was immediately reprinted in the major Los Angeles newspapers:

In the past few years, because of professional requirements, we have been separated just too often and too long. Our sincere and continued efforts to maintain our marriage have failed. We are deeply disappointed that we could not solve our problems. We really tried. We unhappily and reluctantly admit that we have denied to even our closest friends because we wanted to work things out together in as much privacy as possible. There will be a California divorce. Neither of us has another romantic interest whatsoever.²⁶

While the statement does not give particular reasons, Stanwyck told the Los Angeles Superior Court that “he [Taylor] asked me for a divorce. [. . .] He said he has enjoyed his freedom while he was in Italy and wanted to continue to do as he pleased.”²⁷ The divorce was granted on 22 February 1951. As with Stanwyck’s divorce from Frank Fay, this divorce was incorporated within her image, and publicity discourses subsequently depicted her as an independent working

woman rather than the happily married wife of a matinee idol.²⁸ Publicity about Stanwyck's private life began to fade around this time. I argue that this was a combination of Stanwyck's divorce from Taylor (who continued to have a healthy film career and remained a contract star until 1957) and because a single, ageing star was of less interest to audiences (see chapter four).

The teaming of Stanwyck and Taylor in The Night Walker was the selling point of the film, as is evident from the film's tagline: "Robert Taylor... Barbara Stanwyck... Together Again in... The Night Walker" (figure 31). Stanwyck told a reporter that she and Taylor were "friendly to each other on the set but that was it."²⁹ The Night Walker tells the story of Irene Trent (Stanwyck) who is bedevilled by dreams of an imaginary lover. After her husband Howard (Hayden Rork) dies in a fire, the dreams continue and Irene asks scheming lawyer Barry Moreland (Taylor) for help. He tells Irene that Howard is still alive and that he has been attacked by Howard, after Howard killed Joyce (Judi Meredith), a beautician in Irene's beauty shop. Moreland is later revealed as impersonating Howard after having killed him to get an inheritance. When he tries to kill Irene, Moreland is shot by Joyce's husband (Lloyd Bochner) who, it turns out, is the man in Irene's dreams. The Night Walker was part of a 1960s Grand Guignol gothic horror cycle built around such ageing female stars as Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, and Olivia de Havilland, whose careers were on the wane. Grand Guignol usually refers to a "theatre of horror" with shocking details and too much violence (Deák 36).³⁰ The cycle includes such films as What Ever Happened to Baby Jane? (d. Robert Aldrich, US, 1962) starring Davis and Crawford, Strait-Jacket (d. William Castle, US, 1964) starring Crawford, I Saw What You Did (d. William Castle, US, 1965) again starring Crawford, Lady in a Cage starring Olivia de Havilland, Hush ... Hush, Sweet Charlotte (d. Robert Aldrich, US, 1964) starring Davis and de Havilland, and The Night Walker. Of these, What Ever Happened to Baby Jane? was especially successful at the box-office (Aldrich 49). Most of these films capitalized on their stars' names, and are often what Charles Derry has named "horror of personality" films (qtd. in McCarthy 107). According to director Robert Aldrich, he paired former stars so that "people would read into that picture a secret show-biz mythology, almost nostalgia" (qtd. in McCarthy 102). This also worked for The Night Walker, which alluded to Stanwyck and Taylor's previous relationship (see chapter three).



Figure 31: The trailer for Universal's The Night Walker uses Taylor's ...



Figure 31b: ...and Stanwyck's ...



Figure 31c: ...onscreen reunion...

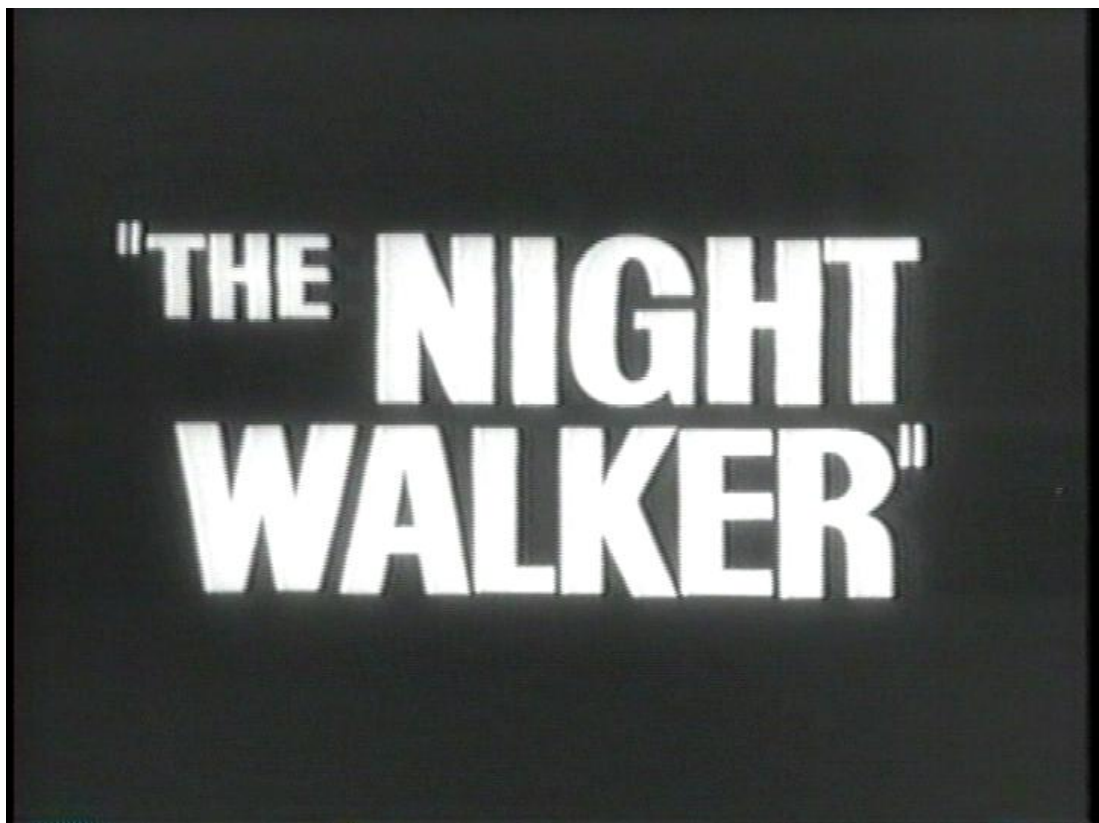


Figure 31d: ...as its selling point.

In these films, former female film stars exhibited themselves as rather repulsive women, often grotesque versions of themselves (most notably in What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?). This is completely opposite to the ageing women Stanwyck had played before, for example in So Big and The Great Man's Lady, who were signifiers of wisdom and beauty. Stanwyck insisted that The Night Walker was not part of the Grand Guignol horror cycle, but that the film was a “shocker” rather than a horror film: “There is a difference. Horror is with the heads rolling and the blood and gore and all that sort of thing. This is a shocker-suspense film” (Kobal 511). The film might indeed not include much blood and gore as most of the British Hammer style horror films of the same time did, but its topic is certainly similar to that of What Ever Happened to Baby Jane? and Hush ... Hush, Sweet Charlotte where “the central characters are made to suffer intolerably for crimes they never committed” and by exhibiting the ageing woman as mentally unstable and a freak (McCarthy 114; Brottman 270). The film is also reminiscent of the 1940s female gothic cycle where the plot plays with the question whether the heroine's anxieties are imagined or real (see chapter three). Director William Castle was known for his shocker films. By 1954 he was firmly established as a B film director and the most important aspect of his films was Castle's extravagant showmanship (McCarthy 78). For example, for his production Macabre (US, 1958), Castle sold insurance to patrons in case they were scared to death. He had skeletons thrown into the audience during the screening of House on Haunted Hill (US, 1958), and for The Tingler (US, 1959) Castle had cinema seats bugged so that patrons would get a shock (Castle 144). The Night Walker, however, bypassed such showmanship tactics, as Castle had hoped that Stanwyck and Taylor “would be strong enough to pull customers in,” however the film “played to almost empty theatres” (Castle 182). The film was dismissed by reviewers and critics as “eerie nonsense” but Bosley Crowther of the New York Times commented that the film would not be worth reporting “if it didn't have Barbara Stanwyck in the role of the somnambulistic sufferer. [. . .] Miss Stanwyck, silver-haired and seasoned, does lend an air of dignity to the otherwise unbelievable woman in this totally unbelievable tale” (“Screen” 22).

Conclusion

In this chapter I showed how Stanwyck's film image was used in her television appearances. I focused on two opposed television genres: Stanwyck's anthology programme The Barbara Stanwyck Show and the continuing Western series The Big Valley. The anthology show attempted to apply a “glamorous Hollywood film star” image to Stanwyck as she hosted the episodes, but because Stanwyck's film image had always been unglamorous and natural rather than glamorous this was not a convincing setup. The teleplays, however, recycled topics of Stanwyck's films, and generally re-used her film characters. I suggest that this evoked

Stanwyck's association with Hollywood more than the attempt to make her glamorous and as such evoke Hollywood glamour. Stanwyck's production company Barwyck was responsible for the stories for the show. Therefore, Stanwyck had "story approval" and could thus (to an extent) decide the stories in which she would perform, taking active part in her career.

Stanwyck's image as a Western performer easily carried over from film to television. Here, Stanwyck played similar characters to those she played in her feature film Westerns: spunky, tough, and independent women who were a match for male Western heroes. In The Big Valley Stanwyck was forced to be less physically active, partially because of her age. She no longer played a single, tough woman, but rather the matriarch of a family that owns a large cattle ranch. I argue that the fact that the series had a female lead in this masculine genre was unusual, but Stanwyck's presence as a veteran of Western performances authenticated her role. Stanwyck's unfeminine image was slightly adjusted for the series where her character Victoria was often seen in a feminine occupation (mother, teacher, etc.) rather than a masculine role as her film characters were (gunslinger, cattle rustler, etc.). The feminization of Stanwyck's character, therefore, was not completely in line with her previous film characterizations. I suggest that this is connected to Stanwyck's age (she was nearly sixty when the series started) and her physical abilities. I also argue that this was because, unlike feature film, television was geared towards family viewing and an unfeminine mother would spoil the mother image.

Finally, I showed that when Stanwyck's marriage to Taylor ended, much of the interest in Stanwyck's off-screen life was gone. Stanwyck and Taylor's onscreen reunion in The Night Walker did not draw audiences to the film. Possibly because younger audiences were not aware of the stars' former union, or because general interest in both stars had faded, Stanwyck's final feature film was no success. Her role of a neurotic, victimized woman was not directly associated with Stanwyck, except for her roles in the female gothic films of the 1940s, and it did not fit her dominant image as a tough, independent woman. It is for the roles in which she displayed her toughness, independence, and strong-headedness that Stanwyck was and would be remembered. Stanwyck's long career endured partly because of her independence--both on- and off-screen--but most importantly because of her unique, pliable image. Jeanine Basinger summarized this image perfectly: "the seeming contradiction of [. . .] a woman who was somehow a grand lady and a down-to-earth dame. She could play a mother or a moll, a cowgirl or a congresswoman, a bedridden invalid or a 'high ridin' woman with a whip. [. . .] [S]he was believable being tough or gentle, shy or bold, innocent or no-better-than-she-should-be." (AFI 9).

Conclusion

“Unless I told the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, it would be silly to write a book.”¹

According to journalist Shirley Eder this was Stanwyck’s answer to the question whether she would ever write an autobiography. The quotation indicates that Stanwyck was very aware that what audiences knew about her was only an image, a manipulated representation of a woman who was born Ruby Stevens but who had been turned into the famous Hollywood film star Barbara Stanwyck. My research has examined the construction of Stanwyck’s star image and explained her star’s fashionability. The intention has been to move away from the aesthetic tradition of analysing an image, towards a re-examination of the star as a dynamic subject. The thesis enriches the field of star studies by providing an understanding of the fashionability of stars. My research has centred on a single Hollywood star, but the questions I have been concerned with can be applied to other stars, and point to broader issues of identity and image. This conclusion consists of two parts. First, I will summarize and discuss my findings in the study of Stanwyck’s image and fashionability. Second, I will discuss the implications of my research method and its influence on my research. I thereby aim to enrich understanding of the construction of star images and in particular of Stanwyck’s image while demonstrating the importance of my research approach. I will also elaborate on Richard Dyer’s idea that an image is a cluster of signifying elements. During my research into Stanwyck’s image and career, I have attempted to develop this idea and I will discuss it here.

No Crinoline-Covered Lady: Explaining Stanwyck’s Fashionability

In the introduction I explained that my aim was to examine Stanwyck’s position as a woman in Hollywood and the agency she had in her career. I have done this by scrutinizing the models of womanhood Stanwyck offered her fans, as well as by investigating how Stanwyck and her agents managed her image behind-the-scenes. Stanwyck’s versatility as an actress benefitted her as a freelance worker: she could play most roles and her box-office value (particularly in the 1940s) suggested profitable runs for most of her films. On the contrary, her versatility also seemed to be a direct result of her freelancing. Stanwyck was not dependent on one studio’s films, but she was open to sign with all studios, which resulted in the variety of roles and films in her career. Stanwyck’s onscreen pliability mirrored her off-screen pliability. Her image could be reconfigured, up to a certain extent, to connect Stanwyck’s image to popular images of women. However, Stanwyck’s image also simultaneously seemed to challenge these dominant images (e.g. connotations of unfeminine, see below), by adding traits that differentiated Stanwyck from other stars. Stanwyck’s freelancing could also be connected

to her independence. Stanwyck was independent from the studios that ruled the film business, in the sense that she was not tied to one studio. Her independence in her career also mirrored the independent characters she played, as well as her off-screen image as an independent woman--particularly when she was not married.

Freelancing meant that Stanwyck, together with her agents, was responsible for her career and her image. Unlike many of her contemporaries--most of whom were contract stars--Stanwyck and her agent had to use Stanwyck's image as a bargaining tool in contract negotiations. I have revealed that Stanwyck was one of the few female stars to have story approval throughout her career. This meant that Stanwyck and her agents had to be very aware of her image, and had to select stories and roles that did not upset her career. Again, this is where her pliable image was beneficial to her freelancing, as Stanwyck could play most roles without upsetting her image. Although Stanwyck had more influence in developing her career than contract stars, she was (usually) dependent on talent agents for contract negotiations, etc. Unfortunately information about Stanwyck's relationship with her agents is (currently) unavailable for research. This means that it is difficult to establish exactly how much agency Stanwyck had in her career.

Throughout this thesis I have also aimed to demonstrate ways in which a star image was constructed and sold to audiences. I have analyzed how Stanwyck was promoted in connection to particular key historical, social, and industrial aspects that featured prominently in American society during her career (the Great Depression, World War II, shifts in the film industry, and the popularity of television), and I have suggested reasons why she was promoted in that way. In attempting to understand Stanwyck's fashionability during her career I have been concerned not with determining the correct meaning of Stanwyck's image, but rather determining which meanings could be read in her image. These meanings are limited, but not restricted to one definite meaning. My research is therefore open to other interpretations.

As the previous chapters suggest, Stanwyck's image consisted of three core elements that were nearly always visible in Stanwyck's image, although, depending on the historical period, some were more apparent than others. I argue here that these elements can be considered the building blocks or the foundation of a star image (see part two). They can be foregrounded or masked, depending on what the star/agent/studio finds important to emphasize. Stanwyck's image was created during her periods at Columbia and Warner Bros. in the early 1930s. I argued that because Stanwyck freelanced after 1935 and relied on a small talent agency rather than a powerful studio, and because she was successful with the image she had in the mid-1930s, her image did not change drastically. The three core elements that returned in Stanwyck's image

throughout her career were connotations with natural, unfeminine, and Stanwyck's inability to submit to domesticity. These elements were continuously reshuffled, masked, or foregrounded so that Stanwyck's image matched the popular image(s) of womanhood. They were part of Stanwyck's image when it was created in the early 1930s, and none of the elements disappeared during her career. The changes in the configuration of these core elements were necessary to adapt Stanwyck's image to correspond with changes in the US climate and to maintain her fashionability.

The core elements

In the early 1930s, Stanwyck was frequently associated with naturalness because of her acting style, the characters she played, and her much-publicized pre-cinema life. As I argued in chapter one, the fit between Stanwyck's characters, her off-screen life, and her acting style offered audiences the idea that Stanwyck was off-screen what she was onscreen. Similarly, Stanwyck's lower-class associations corresponded with the mood of the early Depression years and I argue that this increased Stanwyck's popularity. Because of her marriage to Robert Taylor in 1939 Stanwyck became associated with glamour, rather than natural. Her sudden adherence to conventional notions of femininity matched wartime government propaganda: women were encouraged to be glamorous and beautiful while contributing to the war effort. This demonstrates the pliability of Stanwyck's image: she could (at least temporarily) switch from being associated with the lower-class to being glamorous. However, I argued that this glamorous image was only temporary because when Taylor moved away to join the Navy, the press quickly forgot about Stanwyck's glamour and focused on her career. Stanwyck's characters, however, were often still plain and associated with the lower-class, and naturalness therefore remained in the foreground of Stanwyck's onscreen image. Similarly, Stanwyck's associations with natural caused a discrepancy between her image and her role as glamorous hostess of her television series The Barbara Stanwyck Show. When Stanwyck's career began to fade in the 1950s, particularly because of her age, associations with natural were again foregrounded in Stanwyck's image, but this time natural was not associated with the lower-class, but with simplicity and an unglamorous lifestyle. In the 1950s the dominant image of woman was that of woman as homemaker. Stanwyck's image in the 1950s and 1960s was adapted to suit this image. As such, Stanwyck became a role model for mature women, giving tips about dieting, clothes, and make-up. These tips would likely have appealed to fans as the model of womanhood Stanwyck offered was easy to imitate, particularly for homemakers. However, Stanwyck's advice did not adhere to conventional models of femininity as she displayed a disinterest in beauty and glamour and preference for natural beauty. Stanwyck

promoted a model of womanhood that corresponded to the current US climate, but the model also fitted within the framework of her image.

The second element that can be found in Stanwyck's image throughout her career was her inability to submit to domesticity. This element was not purposely emphasized as Stanwyck's association with natural was, because an inability to submit to domesticity is not a desirable feminine quality. It therefore surfaced less often and repeated attempts were made to mask the element. Stanwyck's inability to submit to domesticity is most obvious from her two divorces. In both marriages Stanwyck's image dominated that of her husband--particularly during her marriage to Frank Fay, less during her marriage to Taylor. During both unions Stanwyck's career was often foregrounded in promotional materials instead of her pleasure in her marriage, which was often highlighted in publicity about married female stars. The foregrounding of Stanwyck's career was connected to critics' interest in her acting ability, which was continuously emphasized in Stanwyck's image.

During her marriage to Fay, however, promotional materials portrayed Stanwyck as a dedicated housewife observing conventional ideals of femininity. This image of Stanwyck fitted the early 1930s dominant image of woman as housekeeper. I argued that Stanwyck was also portrayed as a proper housewife because most of her onscreen characters were unable to submit to domesticity and did not adhere to conventional feminine behaviour (e.g. Illicit and Baby Face). Although this sort of publicity discouraged the idea that Stanwyck was like her characters, articles about Stanwyck's idealized domestic life were mocked by fan magazine writers, suggesting that Stanwyck's off-screen domesticity was only a façade. This was reinforced by the press after Stanwyck's divorce from Fay in 1935. Only during the first few years of Stanwyck's marriage to Taylor did publicity and promotional materials focus on the couple's marital happiness. From the mid-1940s onward, the majority of the publicity materials emphasized Stanwyck's craft and career by praising her acting ability and versatility. Particularly during the Second World War, female film stars were models for working women: they could balance their careers as actresses with their careers as mothers and wives. If they were divorced, the stars were often portrayed as women who were simply too occupied with their work--the work that the men (including male film stars) had left behind when they went to war. Stanwyck's image mirrored this idea. Probably because Stanwyck's career was winding down when she divorced Taylor in 1950, interviews with and articles about Stanwyck's off-screen life are scarce from this point onward.

Similar to Stanwyck's inability to submit to domesticity, the connotations of unfeminine that can be found in Stanwyck's image throughout her career were not desirable traits. However,

the more a feminine image was promoted instead--which did not fit with Stanwyck's early image from the 1930s or the majority of her film characters--the more the unfeminine element was unintentionally highlighted. During the early 1930s, when Stanwyck reached stardom, her career was emphasized in her image and this was balanced with information about Stanwyck's family life so that she could be portrayed as a "proper" woman. When Stanwyck divorced Fay, the press highlighted her independence which was completely opposite her previously suggested image as devoted wife and mother. The latter image was thus exposed as a façade. Stanwyck was not only independent in her off-screen life but also in her career; her break from Fay coincided with the start of her freelance career. During the 1930s independence was not one of the characteristics associated with femininity and Stanwyck's independence could therefore be read as unfeminine. This was also the case for Stanwyck's characters. As concluded earlier, the dominant characteristics of Stanwyck's characters were their strength and independence. Although Stanwyck's characters showed diverse models of womanhood during the war and post-war eras--including feminine women in, for example, The Lady Eve and My Reputation--these characters were always strong and independent. During the 1950s Stanwyck performed predominantly in adventure and Western films, typically masculine genres, and in the 1960s she featured predominantly in Western television series. Media often emphasized Stanwyck's interest in Westerns, which they considered unusual for a woman, and they focussed in particular on Stanwyck's role in The Big Valley which was one of the first Western series that was headed by a female star. In the 1950s and 1960s Stanwyck's roles and interest in Westerns, as well as her off-screen life as a single, mature woman, foregrounded unfeminine elements in Stanwyck's image.

Stanwyck's image and freelancing set her apart from other female film stars of her cohort. I have shown that as a freelance star Stanwyck had significant agency in her career and that her image was a profitable bargaining tool. I then revealed how Stanwyck remained fashionable, in particular through the models of womanhood she portrayed. Finally, I have demonstrated how certain core elements returned in Stanwyck's image throughout her career, but that they often had different connotations that fitted a particular historical period. The core elements of Stanwyck's image cannot be found in the same way in other female stars' images from Stanwyck's generation, and this made Stanwyck unique. Nevertheless, it would be useful to examine whether a star image from earlier or later generations foregrounded these elements in a similar way and how this functioned in other periods. Similar questions to the ones I posed in the introduction remain unanswered for other female stars from Stanwyck's cohort. Is the way Stanwyck's image was constructed similar to the way images of other female stars were created? Is there a difference in the construction of the image between contract stars and

freelance stars? It would be particularly useful to examine the difference in image creation over a longer period of time between freelance and contract stars to determine whether image construction for these stars is the same, and examine the stars' influence in the creation of their image.

Research Approach and Star Analysis

As noted in the introduction, I have largely based my research on primary resources. I have investigated how Stanwyck has been portrayed during her career, examining which elements of her image were foregrounded in which particular period. Following, I have attempted to relate the foregrounding of these elements in certain periods to changes in the film industry or American society, and to explain Stanwyck's fashionability. Through the historical approach I have been able to reveal how, when and why Stanwyck's image changed during her career, in particular what kind of models of womanhood Stanwyck offered her fans and whether these were different from dominant images of women. As such, fan magazines in particular demonstrated the popular images of women, as well as the models of womanhood Stanwyck offered. Various archival papers showed that Stanwyck's standard biographies, unsurprisingly, did not change much throughout her career.² Studio documents showed Stanwyck and her agents' methods of maintaining her star image, as well as Stanwyck's influence in shaping her career. More broadly, the historical approach has helped determine where the meanings that can be read in Stanwyck's image originate from. Through this method, a star image is placed in its original context which provides a better understanding of a star image. The approach cannot, however, explain whether audiences at the time read the same meanings in the image--this would be the field of audience research. Through the use of the historical method, I found that Stanwyck's image consists of three core elements and that these core elements were the main points of emphasis in Stanwyck's image throughout her career. The core elements were subtly changed to fit dominant images of women. However, the core elements could only be reshuffled in limited ways and therefore could never perfectly fit every popular image of woman.

By investigating the creation of a star image I have tried to explain Stanwyck's fashionability. According to Dyer there is "no requirement that a star image should change," which I find only partly true (*Stars* 98). As I demonstrated in my main chapters, Stanwyck's image did not change abruptly or drastically. It did change however, as I showed, so that she remained fashionable. A drastic change can meet with box-office failure, in particular for freelance stars, if the new image is not correctly and intensively promoted. Shifts in Stanwyck's image are therefore subtle, but I have revealed that shifts must occur so that a star can maintain his or her popularity.

My research leads me to conclude that an image is made up of core elements (Dyer's "signs") or "building blocks" that together construct the image, and which are flexible and can be reconfigured to match the image with, in this case, the dominant images of women at a particular time. Stanwyck performed in a variety of genres and in a large number of different roles, but there were always certain parts of her image that were constantly present onscreen and/or off-screen: connotations with natural, unfeminine, and an inability to submit to domesticity. Because these elements could be found in practically all stages of Stanwyck's career, the audience had a notion of what to expect, which created a form of continuation. This does not mean the image was the same at all times. These three elements were so arranged that they could fit in nearly every role Stanwyck played--a girl with a troublesome past finds the man of her dreams so that together they can fight all problems; a burlesque performer teaches world-weary professors about life and love; a conartist pretends to be English aristocracy, etc. Because the core elements were pliable, Stanwyck could play a wide range of roles but maintain a form of continuation in her image without continuously playing herself on screen (like Doris Day, for example). Similarly, Stanwyck was shown in various "roles" off-screen, such as wife, mother, and actress.

These pliable core elements or building blocks therefore construct a skeleton image or a foundation that can be changed to appeal to audiences at particular times. Building blocks can be added to the foundation, but they are more difficult to incorporate, i.e. adding glamour to Stanwyck's image in the early 1940s conflicted with her natural/lower-class element which had been an important part of her image since she reached stardom. This idea allows a complete image alteration by taking out (the majority of) the building blocks/elements and replacing them with new ones. It would be up to the star's studio or agent to promote this new image so that it becomes widely accepted by audiences and replaces the previous image. Simply adding new building blocks can potentially make the image confusing; i.e. adding glamour to Stanwyck's image when she was previously promoted as natural and continued to play plain characters, created conflicts in her image.

My theory also connects to Cathy Klaprat's argument about the perfect fit between persona, character, and audience demand. By changing the combination of building blocks and the addition or subtraction of elements, images can be altered slightly or drastically while studios are trying to find the best fit. Also incorporated is Dyer's notion that stars have finite meanings, because the image is made of a limited number of building blocks. The image cannot include all existing traits and meanings because this would cause confusion. I also believe that these building blocks/elements are connected to the historical period in which they were added to an image, although this would benefit from more research. For example, Stanwyck came

from a lower-class background but rose to become a Hollywood film star, and many of her (early 1930s) characters also survived adversity. This would have appealed to audiences in the Depression era. Similarly, when women were expected to be glamorous and feminine in the early war years, glamour was added to Stanwyck's image and her off-screen association with natural was mostly forgotten.

To be able to make these conclusions, it is necessary to read star images in their historical context to understand their meaning and fashionability. Stars are objects of fashion and intriguing questions about what makes a star popular at a particular time need to be carefully researched by reading the star image in the context in which it was created. This was particularly interesting in Stanwyck's case because of her long career in film and television, and her diversity as an actress. At the end of her film career, a 1963 article in Variety appropriately summarized Stanwyck's image: "Barbara Stanwyck: As a murderess, octogenarian, widow or stripper--a howling success."³

Notes

Abbreviations

AMPAS: Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Margaret Herrick Library)

BS: Barbara Stanwyck

CMC: Constance McCormick Collection

HC: Hearst Collection

HWP: Hal Wallis papers

JHP: Jack Hirshberg papers

MHL: Margaret Herrick Library

USC: University of Southern California

WBA: Warner Bros. Archives

WHW: William H. Wright papers

Introduction

¹ In June 2010, seven Stanwyck box sets had been released (see www.amazon.com and www.amazon.co.uk): Barbara Stanwyck DVD box (part of the Screen Goddess's release which also includes Mae West, Maureen O'Hara, Rita Hayworth, Katharine Hepburn), March 2006; Barbara Stanwyck Signature Collection, October 2007; Barbara Stanwyck Collection, October 2007; The Barbara Stanwyck Collection, April 2008; The Barbara Stanwyck Show Volume 1, Oct. 2009; The Barbara Stanwyck Collection, March 2010; The Barbara Stanwyck Show Volume 2, June 2010.

Examples of other box sets that include Stanwyck's performances are: The Big Valley (season 1 and part of season 2), The Forbidden Hollywood Collection (Volume 1-3), Billy Wilder box set, Douglas Sirk box set, Film Noir Collection, Classic Western Round Up Volume Two, Dangerous Dames Collection, Silver Screen Series (Volumes 1 and 3), and Hollywood's Leading Ladies.

² These biographies include two books by Jane Ellen Wayne, and one each by Al DiOrio and Axel Madsen. There are also three books which focus on Stanwyck's films rather than her private life, written by Ella Smith, Homer Dickens, and Jerry Vermilye.

³ I have not been able to view Broadway Nights (d. Joseph C. Boyle, US, 1927) because there seems to be no surviving copy of the film.

Chapter 1

¹ “Miss Stanwyck Excels” June 1933, review, Baby Face production file, Warner Bros. Archives (WBA).

² Evening Post 27 February 1933, World Telegram 28 February 1933, reviews, Ladies They Talk About production file, WBA.

³ Information about Stanwyck’s pre-cinema life from various fan magazines and biographies: Mook 51; Hall “True Life” 56-66; York 55, 115; E. Wilson 26, 58; Madsen 8-40; E. Smith 1-13; DiOrio 13-53.

⁴ For examples of star biographies that emphasize “being lucky” led to stardom see: Hall, “The Truth”; Evans; Wood; Reed.

⁵ Capra’s autobiography is also entitled The Name Above the Title.

⁶ Ladies of Leisure is an example of a woman who has to fight class boundaries to marry her man.

Forbidden (d. Frank Capra, US, 1932) is an example of woman who is stopped in her rise in class by conventional morality.

⁷ Reviews, Ladies They Talk About production file and Baby Face production file, WBA. Similar reviews are also quoted in E. Smith 54-55.

⁸ Mirror 25 February 1933, Evening Post 27 February 1933, reviews, Ladies They Talk About production file, WBA; “Cinderella Career” 13.

⁹ Fletcher 31; Mook 96; “Cinderella Career” 13. Other articles variously describe Stanwyck as a “real-life girl” (Breen 13), a “natural girl” (E. Wilson 36), or “down to earth” (Willson 69).

¹⁰ For more a detailed examination of authenticity see: Dyer, Heavenly Bodies; Dyer, ““A Star is Born” and the Construction of Authenticity”; Dyer, Stars.

¹¹ See for example all Stanwyck’s biographies compiled by Helen Ferguson Publicity, Barbara Stanwyck (BS) Biography file, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS).

¹² “Barbara Stanwyck.” Look, article, BS Scrapbook vol. II; “Can Barbara Keep Bob Happy?” Screen Guide, BS Scrapbook volume I, Constance McCormick Collection (CMC).

¹³ See for example Martin Shingler’s discussion of Davis’s acting in Of Human Bondage (d. John Cromwell, US, 1934) and Dangerous (d. Alfred E. Green, US, 1935) in Shingler 46-58.

¹⁴ Article c.1936-1937, BS Scrapbook vol. I, CMC.

¹⁵ Using a cloth as an “expressive object” is a “trick” that Stanwyck repeats in Stella Dallas seven years later see Naremore, Acting 87.

¹⁶ See various reviews in the WBA production file for The Gay Sisters, e.g. “Barbara Stanwyck alluringly storms her way through the riproaring (sic) romances [. . .].” “Barbara is always a girl who can be depended upon to [. . .] throw herself into a role with fine fervor.” “[S]he is complete mistress of the delicate control that marks the difference between emotional excitement and mere scenery chewing.” And a review in the WBA production file for My Reputation: e.g. “Miss Stanwyck [. . .] has [. . .] achieved the heights as a great dramatic actress.”

See also a review from the Hollywood Reporter 27 June 1936: “[Stanwyck] sacrifices nothing of her fine sincerity. As usual, she gets from her part more than it originally contained.” The Bride Walks Out Production Code Administration file, AMPAS.

¹⁷ “Movie Talk.” New York Post 15 August 1942, review, The Gay Sisters production file, WBA.

¹⁸ See various readings, in particular about Stanwyck’s film Baby Face: Maltby; Stanfield 58; Jacobs 79-81.

¹⁹ See note 1.

²⁰ The production of cheesecake photographs is not something specifically from this period, studios used cheesecakes to promote their films and their stars well into the 1950s (see chapter three).

²¹ St. Louis Blues can be heard in the Stanwyck films Ten Cents a Dance, Ladies They Talk About, Baby Face, Banjo on my Knee (d. John Cromwell, US, 1936), and Stella Dallas. Frankie and Johnny can be heard in Ladies of Leisure. Blues in the Night can be heard in The Gay Sisters (d. Irving Rapper, US, 1942).

²² See, for example, Reed; Bow and Smith; Lee.

²³ Fan magazine Picturegoer also recorded the “motherhood trend” in 1932. According to the magazine “[p]arenthood is becoming more popular than divorce among the screen celebrities nowadays.” The article notes that most couples adopted their children and concludes with names of stars who recently adopted children, e.g. Constance Bennett, Miriam Hopkins, Wallace Beery, and Stanwyck (Lonergan 17).

²⁴ Stanwyck filed for divorce on 9 November 1935 on account of harassment, see “Miss Stanwyck Asks” 43; “Barbara Stanwyck Gets Divorce” 10. The divorce was finalized on 30 December 1935; see various clippings in BS Scrapbook vol. I, CMC. Stanwyck’s contract to Warner Bros. ended 20 December 1934: Roy Obringer [Warner Bros. general counsel] to Fred Barton (Association of Motion Picture Producers) 9 Oct. 1934, letter, BS Legal file, WBA.

²⁵ Warner Bros. biography 10 March 1933, BS Biography file, Hearst Collection (HC).

²⁶ Hall, Gladys. “Barbara Stanwyck’s Advice to Girls in Love.” Gladys Hall collection, folder 441, AMPAS. Ramsey, “Barbara” 24; Ruddy 24; Ramsey, “Some” 28.

²⁷ Various clippings c.1937-1938, Robert Taylor (RT) Scrapbook vol. I, CMC.

²⁸ Various clippings and “Today Taylor is a Man.” Screen Guide c.1938, RT Scrapbook vol. I, CMC. See also Hall, “Why” 124-125.

²⁹ Various clippings, BS Scrapbook volume I, CMC. Various clippings, RT Scrapbook vol. I, CMC.

³⁰ See note 27.

³¹ Madsen 167-169; DiOrio 119-129; Wayne, Stanwyck 80-83.

³² In Variety’s list of top films for 1935, only Annie Oakley is mentioned (“Leading Film Names of 1935” 4). For 1936 Variety does not mention any of Stanwyck’s films, but notes that the “[c]ombination of Barbara Stanwyck and Joel McCrea in one pic was interesting” (“Best B.O.” 12). Stella Dallas is the only Stanwyck film in the trade paper’s top film list for 1937 (“Top Pix and Stars of 1937” 12). None of Stanwyck’s 1938 films are mentioned in Variety’s list for 1938 (“Rooney ’38 B.O. Champion”). Union Pacific (d. Cecil B. DeMille, US, 1939) is mentioned as one of the “good pix” of 1939 (“1939 Hollywood Toppers” 29).

Chapter 2

¹ William Meiklejohn [head of casting] to Jack Karp [executive studio head] 25 May 1945, office memo; Karp to Henry Ginsberg [studio manager] 6 October 1945, office memo, file 16.f-1485, Paramount production files, AMPAS. Stanwyck to Warner Bros. 25 Oct. 1947, letter; Warner Bros. to MCA/Alan Miller, 24 September 1949, letter, BS Legal file, WBA.

² Contract 29 September 1930, BS Legal file, WBA.

³ Roy Obringer [Warner Bros. general counsel] to Fred Barton (Association of Motion Picture Producers) 9 October 1934, letter, BS Legal file, WBA.

⁴ Warner Bros. to Stanwyck 18 December 1930, letter, BS Legal file, WBA. The production was Night Nurse.

⁵ Freston and Files [law office used by Warner Bros.] to Jack Warner 17 August 1932, letter, BS legal file, WBA.

⁶ See note 2.

⁷ See note 2.

⁸ Darryl Zanuck [head of production] to Obringer 15 June 1932, office memo, BS Legal file, WBA. “Too Loose” 3, see also chapter one.

⁹ Zanuck to Obringer 23 November 1931, office memo, BS Legal file, WBA.

¹⁰ Barbara Fay (Stanwyck) to Zanuck at Warner Bros. 18 February 1932, telegram, BS Legal file, WBA.

¹¹ Barbara Fay (Stanwyck) to Zanuck at Warner Bros. 19 February 1932, telegram, BS Legal file, WBA.

¹² Dover to Obringer 11 November 1932, office memo, BS Legal file, WBA.

¹³ Obringer to Dover 11 November 1932, office memo; Warner Bros. to Stanwyck 11 November 1932, letter; Warner Bros. to Stanwyck September 1932, letter, BS Legal file, WBA.

¹⁴ Warner Bros. to Cradick 16 October 1933, letter, BS Legal file, WBA.

¹⁵ “Barbara Stanwyck – A Silhouette,” Warner Bros. 10 March 1933, BS Biography file, HC. An office memo from the production of Baby Face also notes that Stanwyck made suggestions during a story conference with regards to the “amplification and improvement of the story.” This is the only other reference I have found that evidences of Stanwyck’s involvement in the development of a story. See: Howard Smith [screenwriter] to Zanuck 11 November 1932, office memo, Baby Face production file, WBA.

¹⁶ Stanwyck to Warner Bros. 24 August 1933, letter, BS Legal file, WBA.

¹⁷ References to Stanwyck’s “hot temper” suddenly disappeared after she went freelance, changed agents, and divorced Fay. During the rest of her career, Stanwyck was often described as a very co-operative actress who was particularly friendly with the crews. See BS Scrapbooks, CMC; BS Clipping file, USC.

¹⁸ A noteworthy “flare of temperament” occurred during Stanwyck’s contract with Columbia, before her Warner Bros. contract was effective and before fan magazines described her as “hot-tempered.” Stanwyck began a contractual dispute with Columbia in July 1931, stating that she wanted a higher salary for the production of Forbidden, namely \$50,000 for the film, effectively asking for a \$20,000 raise. Columbia sued Stanwyck for “jumping” studios when she had not fulfilled her contract but walked out. Stanwyck

was “restrained from performing her services [to any studio]” while the suit continued against her. At the same time, Warner Bros. was “spending \$8,000 a day standing by” for her, waiting for Stanwyck to come back and finish filming Night Nurse. “Miss Stanwyck under Court Injunction,” Los Angeles Times 11 September 1931; “‘Jumping’ Bars Up on Actress,” Los Angeles Times 23 July 1931, BS Biography file, AMPAS. Columbia to Warner Bros. 4 September 1931, letter, BS Legal file, WBA. For a more detailed discussion of this incident, see Carman. The press, however, believed that Stanwyck had been forced by her husband to walk out on her Columbia contract, see Jamison; “Cinderella Career”; Calhoun; “Barbara Stanwyck and Columbia”; “Stanwyck Must Adjust.”

¹⁹ Stanwyck to Jack Warner 22 June 1933, telegram, BS Legal file, WBA.

²⁰ Davis was slated to co-star in the film with Mary Astor as her younger sister. However, according to Davis, Astor photographed much older than her and Davis would have to age (through make-up and acting) to be believable as Astor’s older sister. Davis was afraid to play an older character, believing that this would encourage people to think she was older than she was. Davis was already filming a role for which she had to age in the film The Little Foxes (d. William Wyler, US, 1941). See Bette Davis Legal file, 8 Jan. 1941 to 31 Dec. 1941, WBA; Behlmer 150.

²¹ Casting sheet 8 July 1941, production file 1933, The Gay Sisters, WBA.

²² Stars listed in Variety’s annual popularity poll: 1934: Stanwyck (“Leading Film Names of ‘34” 36); 1935: Stanwyck, Hepburn, Rogers, Dunne (“Leading Film Names of 1935”); 1937: Davis, Rogers, Hepburn, Stanwyck (“Top Pix and Stars” 12, 54); 1938: Stanwyck, Davis, Rogers, Hepburn, Russell (“Top Films and Stars” 10, 11); 1939: Davis, Rogers, Stanwyck, Dunne, Russell (“1939 Hollywood” 29, 46); 1940: Davis, Stanwyck (“Top 1940 Stars” 18).

Quigley’s Annual List of Box-Office Champions: Rogers was in the top ten with Fred Astaire from 1935-1937; Davis was in the top ten from 1939 through 1941, see Jewell 268-269.

²³ Budget sheet, production file 1460, The Gay Sisters; Budget sheet 20 October 1941, production file 1998, In This Our Life, WBA.

²⁴ Variety noted that The Lady Eve and Meet John Doe in early 1941 were “good,” “heavy,” and “hot” (“Picture Grosses” 19 March, 26 March, 2 April).

²⁵ Stanwyck with Hal Wallis Productions 16 November 1944, contract, file 2184, Hal Wallis Papers (HWP), AMPAS. Head and Calistro 50.

²⁶ Obringer to Alex Evelove [studio publicity director] 17 February 1942, office memo, picture file 2792, The Gay Sisters, WBA.

²⁷ She is billed first in Christmas in Connecticut, but co-stars with Dennis Morgan and Sydney Greenstreet. In The Two Mrs. Carrolls (d. Peter Godfrey, US, 1947) and Cry Wolf (d. Peter Godfrey, US, 1947), which were made during the same contract period, Stanwyck is billed second under the male leads.

²⁸ Steve Trilling [casting director] to Obringer 25 August 1943, office memo, BS Legal file, WBA.

²⁹ Obringer to Hal Wallis [executive producer] 15 December 1941, office memo; Supplementary Agreement for Barbara Stanwyck 16 December 1941, picture file 2792, The Gay Sisters, WBA.

³⁰ For details of Irving Rapper's career, see Davis 27-39. Brent and de Havilland were both in Variety's top star list for the previous years: "Top 1940 Stars and Pix" 1; "1939 Hollywood Toppers" 1.

For Stanwyck's 1944 contract with Warner Bros., her agent Alan Miller tried to secure a clause that stipulated Stanwyck's films' to be "Class A pictures with a negative cost of not less than \$600,000" as a production value. Warner Bros. denied this request, arguing that it did not assign budgets (and thus certain production values) to films in advance. Obringer to Miller 30 November 1943, office memo, BS Legal file, WBA.

³¹ According to the separate agreement, de Havilland would play a role in the film but she had no interest in the film. Since 8 July 1941 de Havilland appeared on the casting sheet for the film for the role of Susanna, the youngest of the three sisters, but she objected to performing "in the picture with Stanwyck having the big part" which executive producer Wallis feared "would give the studio problems" later on. However, de Havilland was signed to a long-term contract with Warner Bros. at the time and the studio continued to assign her to the film until they found a replacement (at least until 31 December): Trilling to [Jack] Warner – Wallis – [TC] Wright [studio production manager] – Blanke – Rapper – [Perc] Westmore [make-up artist] – [Al] Alleborn [unit manager] – [Jesse] Hibbs [assistant director] 31 December 1941, office memo, production file 1935, The Gay Sisters, WBA.

³² "Barbara Stanwyck Scores Hit in 'The Gay Sisters,'" Sun 15 August 1942; "'The Gay Sisters' Is Drama of Love, Law," Daily News 15 August 1942, reviews, production file 1935, The Gay Sisters, WBA.

³³ Production notes, production file 1468, The Gay Sisters, WBA.

³⁴ [Mort] Blumenstock [head of publicity and advertising in New York] to Obringer 28 April 1942, office memo, picture file 2792, The Gay Sisters, WBA.

³⁵ Contract Barbara Stanwyck 11 December 1941, picture file 2792, The Gay Sisters, WBA.

³⁶ Wallis to Stanwyck 16 October 1978, letter, HWP, AMPAS.

³⁷ Contract Barbara Stanwyck with Hal Wallis Productions 16 November 1944; Contract Barbara Stanwyck with Wallis-Hazen 25 November 1947, file 2184, HWP, AMPAS.

³⁸ That Wallis and Paramount also shared production facilities is obvious from the use of the hall and staircase set that features prominently in the Hal Wallis production The Strange Love of Martha Ivers and which can also be seen in the Paramount production The Bride Wore Boots (d. Irving Pichel, US, 1946).

³⁹ Contract Barbara Stanwyck with Hal Wallis Productions 16 November 1944, file 2184, HWP, AMPAS. For other contracts that include these demands, see Paramount Pictures contract summaries, AMPAS.

⁴⁰ See note 39.

⁴¹ Stanwyck (via her attorney) to Wallis 4 March 1945, letter, file 2184, HWP, AMPAS.

⁴² Meiklejohn to Sidney Justin [Paramount attorney] 7 February 1949, office memo, file 16.f-1485, Paramount production files, AMPAS.

⁴³ Wallis (via his attorney) to Stanwyck 11 March 1946, letter, file 2184, HWP, AMPAS.

⁴⁴ Contract 16 December 1943 (effective date: 1 Jan. 1944), BS Legal file, WBA.

⁴⁵ Contract Barbara Stanwyck with Wallis-Hazen 25 November 1947, file 2184, HWP, AMPAS.

⁴⁶ Wallis to Stanwyck 11 November 1947, letter, file 2189, HWP, AMPAS.

⁴⁷ Stanwyck-Barbara, file 7, Jack Hirshberg Papers (JHP), AMPAS.

⁴⁸ Trilling to Obringer 26 April 1947, office memo, BS Legal file, WBA.

⁴⁹ Contract 16 December 1943 and amendments to contract 20 Aug. 1947, BS Legal file, WBA.

⁵⁰ See note 45.

⁵¹ The Bride Wore Boots, contract between Stanwyck and Paramount 25 May 1945; California (d. John Farrow, US, 1947), contract between Stanwyck and Paramount 16 October 1945, file 2184, HWP, AMPAS.

⁵² Office memo 17 March 1949, file 2184, HWP, AMPAS.

⁵³ "I Married a Dead Man," contract between Stanwyck and Paramount 23 February 1949, file 2184, HWP, AMPAS.

Chapter 3

¹ According to Variety, "top grossers" are films that made more than \$1,000,000. 1942: Ball of Fire, The Gay Sisters, The Great Man's Lady (d. William A. Wellman, US, 1942) ("101 Pix" 3, 58). 1943: Lady of Burlesque ("Top Grossers 1943" 1). Variety did not produce "top grosser lists" in 1945 and 1946. 1946: The Strange Love of Martha Ivers, My Reputation ("Top Grossers 1946" 1, 8). 1947: California (d. John Farrow, US, 1947), The Two Mrs. Carrolls, Cry Wolf, ("Top Grossers 1947" 63). 1948: Sorry, Wrong Number, B.F.'s Daughter (d. Robert Z. Leonard, US, 1948) ("Rio" 46).

² "Miss Stanwyck Proves Versatility in Films." Los Angeles Examiner c.1942-1943, BS Scrapbook vol. II, CMC.

³ I will discuss many of the roles and films that I mention here in depth in the following section.

⁴ BS biography by Helen Ferguson Publicity c.1948, BS Biography file, AMPAS. BS biography by Helen Ferguson Publicity 8 Oct. 1958, BS Biography file, HC.

⁵ "Stanwyck the Unpredictable." Screen Guide c.1944, BS Scrapbook vol. II, CMC.

⁶ "Hollywood Is My Beat." Hollywood Citizen-News, BS Scrapbook vol. II, CMC.

⁷ Silver Screen c.1941, BS Scrapbook vol. I, CMC.

⁸ Although the film is actually a hybrid of genres (Western, melodrama, romance), it was promoted as a Western, particularly in articles discussing Stanwyck's performance, and in the film's press book, see BS Scrapbook vol. I, CMC. The Great Man's Lady press book.

⁹ See also chapter two. "Barbara Stanwyck Scores a Hit in 'The Gay Sisters,'" "Sparkling Romances at Strand," reviews, file 1935, The Gay Sisters; "Box Office Slant" and Showman's Trade Review, reviews, production file, My Reputation, WBA.

¹⁰ The Gay Sisters, My Reputation, Cry Wolf, production files, WBA. BS files, JHP, AMPAS.

¹¹ "Barbara Stanwyck." Look c.1947-1948, BS Scrapbook vol. II, CMC; "Biggest Salaries" 13, 25.

¹² File 1949-68 and 8 June 1944, JHP, AMPAS.

¹³ BS biography by Hunt Stromberg Productions 15 Oct. 1942, BS Biography file, HC.

¹⁴ See for example the claims made in The More the Merrier (d. George Stevens, US, 1943) and Government Girl: “eight girls to every fellow” and “ten girls to every man” respectively.

¹⁵ See also Krutnik, “Critical Accommodations.”

¹⁶ These films are: Wings of the Navy (d. Lloyd Bacon, US, 1939), Thank Your Lucky Stars (d. David Butler, US, 1943), Princess O’Rourke (d. Norman Krasna, US, 1943), Government Girl, and The Well-Groomed Bride (d. Sidney Lanfield, US, 1946). This last film was released after the war, but produced in early 1945 (“The Well-Groomed Bride”). To Each His Own (d. Mitchell Leisen, US, 1946) also has World War II as a central topic, but this film was produced after the war (“To Each His Own”).

¹⁷ Page 76-140, Olivia de Havilland Scrapbook vol. II, CMC.

¹⁸ BS biography by Hunt Stromberg Productions 15 Oct. 1942, BS Biography file, HC. Stanwyck’s wish not to be linked to much of her charity work was regularly emphasized throughout her career, see BS Scrapbooks, CMC.

¹⁹ “Barbara Brings Home the Bacon.” Los Angeles Examiner c.1941-1942; Los Angeles Examiner (China Relief); Los Angeles Times (Red Cross) both c.1943-1944, BS Scrapbook vol. II, CMC. “Hollywood Women at War” 44-46. Ardmore, Jane. “Barbara Stanwyck... Who Says I’m Lonely,” BS Biography file, AMPAS.

²⁰ Article 13 Apr. 1944, BS 1944-1947 file, HC.

²¹ Other war-related films in which Stanwyck performed were Hollywood Canteen (d. Delmer Daves, US, 1944) and My Reputation.

²² See for example also Preston Sturges’s films The Miracle of Morgan’s Creek (US, 1944) and Hail the Conquering Hero (US, 1944) as other films that work against orthodox ideas of what women were supposed to be.

²³ Final script 11 May 1944, file 1811, Christmas in Connecticut, WBA.

²⁴ While under contract to Warner Bros., Stanwyck had a very small part in the revue musical Hollywood Canteen which featured nearly all of Warner Bros.’ stars.

²⁵ Stanwyck, Barbara. “Stop Saying Can’t!” Screenland c.1948-1949, BS Scrapbook vol. III, CMC.

²⁶ Examples of Stanwyck’s characters that killed (or attempted to kill) unintended or in self-defence: Lulu Smith in Forbidden, Nan Taylor in Ladies They Talk About, and Mary Archer in Ever in My Heart.

²⁷ “For Grown-Ups Only-‘Double Indemnity,’” article, BS Scrapbook vol. II, CMC.

²⁸ Hollywood-Citizen-News 17 August 1944, article, BS Scrapbook vol. II, CMC.

²⁹ Various articles c.1944, BS Scrapbook vol. II, CMC.

³⁰ Powers, Mary. “She’s Murder.” The Photoplayer 13 Nov. 1948: 4+, JHP, AMPAS.

³¹ See also Kaplan, Women in Film Noir and Hanson.

³² Except for Gaslight, all these films have female writers who have either written the film’s source (as for Rebecca) or have worked on the screenplay or adaptation.

³³ Los Angeles Times c.1944, BS Scrapbook vol. II, CMC.

³⁴ See for example Stanwyck’s performances in Lady of Burlesque, Double Indemnity, and Ball of Fire.

³⁵ Orry-Kelly designed costumes for most female Warner Bros. stars, including Bette Davis, Katharine Hepburn, Olivia de Havilland, and Ann Sheridan.

³⁶ Los Angeles Examiner c.1939-1940, BS Scrapbook vol. I, CMC. See also Corliss, "Old Feeling."

³⁷ Screen Guide c.1941, BS Scrapbook vol. I, CMC.

³⁸ Marriages also featured prominently in the images of, for example, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks Sr., Marilyn Monroe and Joe DiMaggio, and Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, see Fowles 171-173. Especially the marriage of Pickford and Fairbanks was often cited as "the ideal marriage," see Balio, United Artists 32.

³⁹ Hollywood Citizen-News c.1941-1942, BS Scrapbook vol. I, CMC.

⁴⁰ Article 16 Nov. 1948, BS 1948 file, HC.

⁴¹ See note 30.

⁴² BS biography by Helen Ferguson Publicity c.1948, BS Biography file, AMPAS.

⁴³ Silver Screen, review of The Lady Eve; Modern Screen, review of The Lady Eve, BS Scrapbook vol. I, CMC. See also W.H.M. 9.

⁴⁴ In the mid- and late 1930s, after Stanwyck had left Columbia, Jean Arthur replaced Stanwyck in Frank Capra's films, and as Columbia's only female star.

⁴⁵ BS Scrapbook vol. I and II, CMC.

Chapter 4

¹ From an advertisement in Variety for Cattle Queen of Montana (15 Dec. 1954: 29).

² See "Barbara Stanwyck: 'A Stand-up Dame'" (1990), "Barbara Stanwyck, Actress, Dead at 82" (1990), and various other clippings and obituaries, BS Clipping file, USC; various obituaries and clippings, BS Scrapbook vol. IV, CMC.

³ See Conant for a review of the early impact of the decrees.

⁴ Hopper, Hedda. "Stanwyck Honesty and Loyalty Score High for 'Fighting Lady.'" Chicago Tribune 15 April 1951, BS Scrapbook, vol. III, CMC. BS Biography by Helen Ferguson Publicity c.1948; Parsons, Louella, and Harriet Parsons. "Barbara Stanwyck: Lots of Friends," BS Biography file, AMPAS.

⁵ The File on Thelma Jordon, JHP, AMPAS.

⁶ Barbara Stanwyck Show hostess openings and closings, William H. Wright Collection (WHW), AMPAS.

⁷ Parsons, Louella, and Harriet Parsons. "Barbara Stanwyck: Lots of Friends," BS Biography file, AMPAS.

⁸ BS Biography by Helen Ferguson Publicity c.1948, BS Biography file, AMPAS.

⁹ Block, Maxime. "Frankly 42!" c.1949, BS Biography file, AMPAS.

¹⁰ Articles 1949-174, 1949-183, JHP, AMPAS.

¹¹ See note 9.

Rogers St. Johns, Adela. "The Hollywood Story." American Weekly, BS Scrapbook vol. III, CMC.

BS Biography by Helen Ferguson PR 8 October 1958, BS Biography file, HC. BS Biography by Helen Ferguson PR c.1948, BS Biography file; BS Biography by Helen Ferguson PR November 1964, JHP, AMPAS. Paramount Biography February 1949; RKO Biography c.1952, BS Clipping file, USC.

¹² Stanwyck, Barbara. "Look Ahead!" Photoplay, BS Scrapbook vol. III, CMC.

¹³ Parsons, Louella O. "Barbara Stanwyck." Los Angeles Examiner, BS Scrapbook vol. III, CMC. A 1967 article in Photoplay also called attention to Stanwyck's peculiar diet: "Everybody knows she never eats anything but steak for dinner. What she usually has for lunch is more beef and raw--a so-called cannibal sandwich. I tell you, she's unique" (Waterbury 97).

¹⁴ Lane, Lydia. "Barbara Stanwyck Unveils Mysteries of Skin Beauty." Los Angeles Examiner 4 March 1951, BS Scrapbook vol. II, CMC.

¹⁵ See note 12.

¹⁶ See note 12.

¹⁷ BS Biography by Helen Ferguson Publicity 8 October 1958, BS Biography file, HC. BS Biography by Helen Ferguson Publicity c.1948, BS Biography file, AMPAS.

¹⁸ Hopper, Hedda. "Stanwyck Honesty and Loyalty Score High for 'Fighting Lady.'" Chicago Tribune 15 April 1951, BS Scrapbook vol. III, CMC.

¹⁹ See note 17.

²⁰ Articles 1949-132, JHP, AMPAS.

²¹ Graham, Sheila. "Stanwyck: Film Queen's 'Dead' at 50, Offered Nothing but Horror Roles." Philadelphia Sun-Bulletin 3 April 1966, BS Clipping file, USC.

²² See also the current AMC (formerly American Movie Classics) hit series Mad Men (2007-ongoing), which returns to the corporate universe of the early 1960s.

²³ Contract summary 14 February 1964, Roustabout file, Paramount production files, AMPAS.

²⁴ David Bret's biography about Joan Crawford notes that Stanwyck and Presley could not "stand the sight of [each] other" although it does not disclose any sources that confirm this (242).

²⁵ "Vibrant Stanwyck Has Heart Set on Rugged Westerns." Los Angeles Times 13 October 1958; Ryon, Art. "Barbara Stanwyck Eager for Westerns," BS Clipping file, USC.

²⁶ BS to Hedda Hopper 25 August 1965, letter, Hedda Hopper file 3337, AMPAS.

²⁷ See also Hopper, Hedda. "Stanwyck Honesty and Loyalty Score High for 'Fighting Lady.'" Chicago Tribune 15 April 1951, BS Scrapbook vol. III, CMC; Waterbury 96-97; "Inside Hollywood" 10.

²⁸ What exactly changed the Western in the 1950s is open to discussion. Scholars generally agree that there is a distinct development in the genre in this period but the description of this development is left vague. Thomas Schatz's suggested differences seem to be the ones that are described most often by various scholars. For various attempts at describing the development, see: Bazin 150-156; Lovell, "The Western" 164-175; Wright; Gallagher 262-276.

²⁹ Other non-Stanwyck examples include Duel in the Sun and Red River.

³⁰ This quotation based on Nietzsche's philosophy is taken from the original version of Baby Face. The quotation was amended in the theatrical release version to meet demands of the PCA and that version is not as direct but more conventional in its views how women can succeed.

³¹ Similarly, the title song for The Maverick Queen describes Stanwyck's character, although this song is not sung within the diegesis, as the songs from Forty Guns and California, but is played over the opening credits to inform the audience (rather than other characters) about Stanwyck's character:

I'll tell you the tale of the maverick queen/Most dangerous woman the West's ever seen

There was something about her since she was sixteen/That attracted the men to the maverick queen.

³² "Stanwyck at Home." c.1938-1939, BS Scrapbook vol. I, CMC. Block, Maxime. "Frankly 42!" c.1949, BS Biography file, AMPAS.

³³ Recent sources (e.g. E. Smith, McBride "Screen Queen," Drew, Corliss) emphasize the fact that Stanwyck did her own stunts, but archival materials, although referring to it regularly, did not emphasize it as much.

³⁴ Lane, Lydia. "Miss Stanwyck for Right Eating Habits." Los Angeles Times 4 May 1958, BS Scrapbook vol. III, CMC.

³⁵ BS Biography by Helen Ferguson Publicity 8 October 1958, BS Biography file, HC.

Chapter 5

¹ RKO Biography c.1953, BS Clipping file, USC. BS Biography by Helen Ferguson Publicity c.1948, BS Biography file, AMPAS. Benny 42-43, 107-108. Stanwyck performed five times on Jack Benny's radio programme between 1940 and 1948.

² The end credits for an unaired pilot episode of "Barbara Stanwyck Presents The Sponsor's Theatre" from 1956 on the DVD box set of The Barbara Stanwyck Show: Volume 1 shows that this episode was "a Barden Production" which could be a production company set up by Stanwyck ("Bar") and producer Jack Denove ("den") but I have found no evidence of this, except that an article in Variety in 1956 announced that Stanwyck and the Jaffe Agency (which was Stanwyck's talent agency at that time) were creating a "telepix series" (i.e. an anthology series) which she would be "co-producing" with Jack Denove ("Stanwyck Telepix" 25).

³ "NBC-TV Signs Barbara Stanwyck," Helen Ferguson Publicity press release, WHW, AMPAS.

⁴ Barwyck Corporation to Louis F. Edelman, letter; Joint Venture Agreement between Louis F. Edelman T.V. Productions and Barwyck Corporation 4 January 1959, WHW, AMPAS.

⁵ Agreement between E.S.W. Enterprises and BS 24 March 1959, WHW, AMPAS.

⁶ "Biographical feature on Barbara Stanwyck 1965," JHP, AMPAS. Stanwyck was not the only star who found it difficult to be "herself" on screen. Joseph Cotton did not know how to "play a guy named Joseph Cotton" (Becker 105).

⁷ Correspondence regarding openings and closings, WHW, AMPAS.

⁸ Final script "Triple C" teleplay by Margaret Fitts 21 August 1959. See similar character descriptions in "Dragon by the Tail" (teleplay by Albert Beich 26 October 1959), "The Cornerstone" (teleplay by

William Fay 14 August 1959), and "A Man's Game" (teleplay by David Harmon and Albert Beich 11 September 1959), WHW, AMPAS.

⁹ "Dragon by the Tail" and "The Miraculous Journey of Tadpole Chan," WHW, AMPAS.

¹⁰ Quotations from the final script of "A Man's Game," WHW, AMPAS.

¹¹ ESW Enterprises statements 1960-1961, WHW, AMPAS.

¹² Dale Evans was a key part of the juvenile-targeted Roy Rogers television shows early in the 1950s, but she did not have her own show.

¹³ "Comparisons Don't Worry Stanwyck." Los Angeles Times 4 August 1965, BS Scrapbook vol. IV, CMC.

¹⁴ Fewer series, such as Here's Lucy (1968-1974) and Julia (1968-1971), focused on family life with an absent father.

¹⁵ See note 13.

¹⁶ Portrait Barbara Stanwyck; "Stanwyck, The Frustrated Stuntwoman." TV Guide 21 January 1961, WHW, AMPAS; Waterbury 96-97; "Barbara Stanwyck Eager for Westerns," BS Clipping file, USC; Los Angeles Examiner 2 December 1949, BS 1948 file, HC.

¹⁷ During her first contract with Warner Bros. in the early 1930s, Stanwyck had been billed as "Miss Barbara Stanwyck," an honour that was further only bestowed upon three other stars: Mr John Barrymore, Mr George Arliss, and Miss Ruth Chatterton.

¹⁸ See note 13.

¹⁹ "Biographical Feature on Barbara Stanwyck 1965," JHP, AMPAS.

²⁰ NBC Biography 2 September 1960, BS Biography file, HC.

²¹ BS to Hopper 25 August 1965, letter, Hedda Hopper papers, AMPAS.

²² See biographies by Wayne, Madsen, and DiOrio; "Actress Barbara Stanwyck Dies" 20; Hollywood Reporter 22 January 1990, Daily News 21 January 1990, BS Clipping file, USC; McBride "Screen Queen" 58.

²³ "Miss Stanwyck Tabbed as 'Too Television.'" Los Angeles Times 3 May 1971, BS Scrapbook vol. IV, CMC.

²⁴ "Stanwyck and Taylor Congenial Opposites." Los Angeles Times c.1947, RT Scrapbook vol. I, CMC.

²⁵ "Can Barbara Keep Bob Happy?" c.1938-1939, "Ranch Life for Barbara and Bob." c.1938-1939, Screen Guide c.1941-1942, articles, BS Scrapbook vol. I, CMC. See also various articles in the BS scrapbooks in the CMC; Ramsey, "Barbara Stanwyck" and "Some Call"; Deere.

²⁶ "Barbara Stanwyck to Seek Divorce." Los Angeles Times 16 December 1950, BS Biography file, AMPAS.

²⁷ Los Angeles Times 22 February 1951, BS Scrapbook vol. III, CMC.

²⁸ "The Hollywood Story." American Weekly c.1951; "Worlds Apart." Modern Screen c.1951; Stanwyck, Barbara. "Look Ahead!" Photoplay c.1951; Stanwyck, Barbara. "Are You A Door Mat?" Los Angeles Times c.1953-1953, articles, BS Scrapbook vol. III, CMC.

²⁹ Bascomb, Lana. "Barbara Stanwyck... The Lady Lives a Dream," article, BS Biography file, AMPAS.

³⁰ The term is derived from writer Oscar Méténier's theatre Grand Guignol which opened in 1897 in Paris. The theatre was famous for its naturalistic horror productions (Deák 36).

Conclusion

¹ Eder, Shirley. "Barbara Stanwyck." 28 March 1983, article, BS Clipping file, USC.

² Hollywood Citizen-News, article, c.1940, BS Scrapbook vol. I, CMC. BS Biography by Hunt Stromberg Productions 15 October 1942; BS Biography by Helen Ferguson Publicity 8 October 1958, BS Biography file, HC. BS Biography by Helen Ferguson PR c.1948, BS Biography file, AMPAS. Paramount Biography February 1949; RKO Biography c.1952, BS Clipping file, USC.

³ Hagen 10.

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It Happened at the World's Fair. Dir. Norman Taurog. Perf. Elvis Presley, Joan O'Brien, Gary Lockwood. MGM, 1963.

Johnny Guitar. Dir. Nicholas Ray. Perf. Joan Crawford, Sterling Hayden, Mercedes McCambridge. Republic Pictures, 1954.

King Creole. Dir. Michael Curtiz. Perf. Elvis Presley, Carolyn Jones, Walter Matthau. Paramount Pictures, 1958.

Ladies of Leisure. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Ralph Graves, Lowell Sherman. Columbia Pictures, 1930.

Ladies They Talk About. Dir. William Keighley and Howard Bretherton. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Preston Foster, Lyle Talbot. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1933.

Lady of Burlesque. Dir. William A. Wellman. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Michael O'Shea, Iris Adrian. United Artists, 1943.

Lady in a Cage. Dir. Walter Grauman. Perf. Olivia de Havilland, James Caan, Jennifer Billingsley. Paramount Pictures, 1964.

The Lady Eve. Dir. Preston Sturges. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Henry Fonda, Charles Coburn. Paramount Pictures, 1941.

The Lady Gambles. Dir. Michael Gordon. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Preston, Steven McNally. Universal Pictures, 1949.

The Little Foxes. Dir. William Wyler. Perf. Bette Davis, Herbert Marshall, Teresa Wright. RKO Pictures, 1941.

The Locked Door. Dir. George Fitzmaurice. Perf. Rod La Rocque, Barbara Stanwyck, William Boyd. United Artists, 1929.

Macabre. Dir. William Castle. Perf. William Prince, Jim Backus, Christine White. Allied Artists Pictures, 1958.

Magnificent Obsession. Dir. John M. Stahl. Perf. Irene Dunne, Robert Taylor, Charles Butterworth. Universal Pictures, 1936.

The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit. Dir. Nunnally Johnson. Perf. Gregory Peck, Jennifer Jones, Frederic March. Twentieth Century-Fox Film, 1956.

The Maverick Queen. Dir. Joe Kane. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Barry Sullivan, Scott Brady. Republic Pictures, 1956.

Meet John Doe. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, Edward Arnold. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1941.

A Message to Garcia. Dir. George Marshall. Perf. Wallace Beery, Barbara Stanwyck, John Boles. Twentieth Century-Fox Film, 1936.

Mexicali Rose. Dir. Erle C. Kenton. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Sam Hardy, William Janney. Columbia Pictures, 1929.

The Miracle of Morgan's Creek. Dir. Preston Sturges. Perf. Eddie Bracken, Betty Hutton, Diana Lynn. Paramount Pictures, 1944.

The Miracle Woman. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, David Manners, Sam Hardy. Columbia Pictures, 1931.

Mr. Deeds Goes to Town. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. Gary Cooper, Jean Arthur, George Bancroft. Columbia Pictures, 1936.

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. Jean Arthur, James Stewart, Claude Rains. Columbia Pictures, 1939.

The More the Merrier. Dir. George Stevens. Perf. Jean Arthur, Joel McCrea, Charles Coburn. Columbia Pictures, 1943.

My Reputation. Dir. Curtis Bernhardt. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, George Brent, Warner Anderson. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1946.

Night Nurse. Dir. William A. Wellman. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Ben Lyon, Joan Blondell. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1931.

The Night Walker. Dir. William Castle. Perf. Robert Taylor, Barbara Stanwyck, Judi Meredith. Universal Pictures, 1964.

No Man of Her Own. Dir. Mitchell Leisen. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, John Lund, Jane Cowl. Paramount Pictures, 1950.

Now, Voyager. Dir. Irving Rapper. Perf. Bette Davis, Paul Henreid, Claude Rains. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1942.

Of Human Bondage. Dir. John Cromwell. Perf. Leslie Howard, Bette Davis, Frances Dee. RKO Radio Pictures, 1934.

The Other Love. Dir. André de Toth. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, David Niven, Richard Conte. United Artists, 1947.

Patterns. Dir. Fielder Cook. Perf. Van Heflin, Everett Sloan, Ed Begley. United Artists, 1956.

The Plough and the Stars. Dir. John Ford. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Preston Foster, Barry Fitzgerald. RKO Radio Pictures, 1937.

Pocketful of Miracles. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. Glenn Ford, Bette Davis, Hope Lange. United Artists, 1961.

Princess O'Rourke. Dir. Norman Krasna. Perf. Olivia de Havilland, Robert Cummings, Charles Coburn. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1943.

The Purchase Price. Dir. William A. Wellman. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, George Brent, Lyle Talbot. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1932.

Quo Vadis. Dir. Mervyn LeRoy. Perf. Robert Taylor, Deborah Kerr, Leo Genn. MGM, 1951.

Rancho Notorious. Dir. Fritz Lang. Perf. Marlene Dietrich, Arthur Kennedy, Mel Ferrer. RKO Radio Pictures, 1952.

Rebecca. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Laurence Olivier, Joan Fontaine, George Sanders. United Artists, 1940.

The Reckless Moment. Dir. Max Ophuls. Perf. James Mason, Joan Bennett, Geraldine Brooks. Columbia Pictures, 1949.

Red River. Dir. Howard Hawks. Perf. John Wayne, Montgomery Clift, Joanne Dru. United Artists, 1948.

Red Salute. Dir. Sidney Lanfield. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Young, Hardie Albright. United Artists, 1935.

Remember the Night. Dir. Mitchell Leisen. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray, Beulah Bondi. Paramount Pictures, 1940.

Roustabout. Dir. John Rich. Perf. Elvis Presley, Barbara Stanwyck, Joan Freeman. Paramount Pictures, 1964.

Safe in Hell. Dir. William A. Wellman. Perf. Dorothy MacKaill, Donald Cook, Ralf Harolde. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1931.

Shane. Dir. George Stevens. Perf. Alan Ladd, Jean Arthur, Van Heflin. Paramount Pictures, 1953.

Shopworn. Dir. Nicholas Grinde. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Regis Toomey, ZaSu Pitts. Columbia Pictures, 1932.

The Sin of Madelon Claudet. Dir. Edgar Selwyn. Perf. Helen Hayes, Lewis Stone, Neil Hamilton. MGM, 1931.

Since You Went Away. Dir. John Cromwell. Perf. Claudette Colbert, Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotton. United Artists, 1944.

So Big. Dir. William A. Wellman. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, George Brent, Dickie Moore.
Warner Bros. Pictures, 1932.

Sorry, Wrong Number. Dir. Anatole Litvak. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Burt Lancaster, Ann
Richards. Paramount Pictures, 1948.

Stand Up and Fight. Dir. W.S. Van Dyke. Perf. Wallace Beery, Robert Taylor, Florence Rice.
MGM, 1939.

The Star. Dir. Stuart Heisler. Perf. Bette Davis, Sterling Hayden, Natalie Wood. Twentieth
Century-Fox Film, 1952.

State of the Union. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn, Van Johnson.
MGM, 1948.

Stella Dallas. Dir. King Vidor. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, John Boles, Anne Shirley. United
Artists, 1937.

Strait-Jacket. Dir. William Castle. Perf. Joan Crawford, Diane Baker, Leif Erickson. Columbia
Pictures, 1964.

The Strange Love of Martha Ivers. Dir. Lewis Milestone. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Van Heflin,
Lizabeth Scott. Paramount Pictures, 1946.

Strategic Air Command. Dir. Anthony Mann. Perf. James Stewart, June Allyson, Frank
Lovejoy. Paramount Pictures, 1955.

Suspicion. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Cary Grant, Joan Fontaine, Cedric Hardwicke. RKO
Radio Pictures, 1941.

Ten Cents a Dance. Dir. Lionel Barrymore. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Ricardo Cortez, Monroe
Owsley. Columbia Pictures, 1931.

Tender Comrade. Dir. Edward Dmytryk. Perf. Ginger Rogers, Robert Ryan, Ruth Hussey. RKO
Radio Pictures, 1944.

Thank Your Lucky Stars. Dir. David Butler. Perf. Humphrey Bogart, Eddie Cantor, Olivia de
Havilland. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1943.

There's Always Tomorrow. Dir. Douglas Sirk. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray, Joan
Bennett. Universal Pictures, 1956.

These Wilder Years. Dir. Roy Rowland. Perf. James Cagney, Barbara Stanwyck, Walter Pidgeon. MGM, 1956.

This is My Affair. Dir. William A. Seiter. Perf. Robert Taylor, Barbara Stanwyck, Victor McLaglen. Twentieth Century-Fox Film, 1937.

The Tinger. Dir. William Castle. Perf. Vincent Price, Judith Evelyn, Darryl Hickman. Columbia Pictures, 1959.

Titanic. Dir. Jean Negulesco. Perf. Clifton Webb, Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Wagner. Twentieth Century-Fox Film, 1953.

To Each His Own. Dir. Mitchell Leisen. Perf. Olivia de Havilland, Mary Anderson, Roland Culver. Paramount Pictures, 1946.

Two Guns and a Badge. Dir. Lewis D. Collins. Perf. Wayne Morris, Morris Ankrum, Beverly Garland. Allied Artists Pictures, 1954.

The Two Mrs. Carrolls. Dir. Peter Godfrey. Perf. Humphrey Bogart, Barbara Stanwyck, Alexis Smith. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1947.

Union Pacific. Dir. Cecil B. DeMille. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, Akim Tamiroff. Paramount Pictures, 1939.

The Violent Men. Dir. Rudolph Maté. Perf. Glenn Ford, Barbara Stanwyck, Edward G. Robinson. Columbia Pictures, 1955.

Viva Las Vegas. Dir. George Sidney. Perf. Elvis Presley, Ann-Margret, Cesare Danova. MGM, 1964.

Walk on the Wild Side. Dir. Edward Dmytryk. Perf. Laurence Harvey, Capucine, Jane Fonda. Columbia Pictures, 1962.

The Well-Groomed Bride. Dir. Sidney Lanfield. Perf. Olivia de Havilland, Ray Milland, Sonny Tufts. Paramount Pictures, 1946.

What Ever Happened to Baby Jane? Dir. Robert Aldrich. Perf. Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, Victor Buono. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1962.

Winchester '73. Dir. Anthony Mann. Perf. James Stewart, Shelley Winters, Dan Duryea. Universal Pictures, 1950.

Wings of the Navy. Dir. Lloyd Bacon. Perf. George Brent, Olivia de Havilland, John Payne.
Warner Bros. Pictures, 1939.

Woman's World. Dir. Jean Negulesco. Perf. Clifton Webb, June Allyson, Van Heflin.
Twentieth Century-Fox Film, 1954.

You Came Along. Dir. John Farrow. Perf. Robert Cummings, Lizabeth Scott, Don DeFore.
Paramount Pictures, 1945.

You Belong to Me. Dir. Wesley Ruggles. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Henry Fonda, Edgar
Buchanan. Columbia Pictures, 1941.

Television series

Alcoa Theatre. NBC (National Broadcasting Company). 1957-1960.

Alfred Hitchcock Presents. CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System). 1955-1960; NBC. 1960-1962.

"Alias Nelly Handley." The Big Valley. ABC (American Broadcasting Company). 24 Feb. 1969.

"Ambush." The Big Valley. ABC. 18 Sept. 1967.

Ann Sothern Show. CBS. 1958-1961.

Annie Oakley. Syndicated programming. 1954-1956.

"Assassin." The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC. 15 May 1961.

The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC. 1960-1961.

"Barbary Red." The Big Valley. ABC. 16 Feb. 1966.

The Big Valley. ABC. 1965-1969.

Bonanza. NBC. 1959-1973.

"Boots with my Father's Name." The Big Valley. ABC. 29 Sept. 1965.

"By Force and Violence." The Big Valley. ABC. 30 Mar. 1966.

The Colbys. ABC. 1985-1987.

“Confession.” The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC. 20 Feb. 1961.

“The Cornerstone.” The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC. 2 Jan. 1961.

“A Day of Terror.” The Big Valley. ABC. 12 Dec. 1966.

The Dick Powell Show. NBC. 1961-1963.

The Donna Reed Show. ABC. 1958-1966.

“Dragon by the Tail.” The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC. 30 Jan. 1960.

The DuPont Show with June Allyson. CBS. 1959-1961.

Dynasty. ABC. 1981-1989.

“Earthquake.” The Big Valley. ABC. 10 Nov. 1965.

Family Affair. CBS. 1966-1971.

Ford Theatre. NBC. 1952-1956; ABC. 1956-1957.

“Forty Rifles.” The Big Valley. ABC. 22 Sept. 1965.

Four Star Playhouse. CBS. 1952-1956.

“Frightened Doll.” The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC. 24 Apr. 1961.

Frontier. NBC. 1955-1956.

General Electric Theater. CBS. 1953-1962.

Gunsmoke. CBS. 1955-1975.

Here’s Lucy. CBS. 1968-1974.

The High Chaparral. NBC. 1967-1971.

“House in Order.” The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC. 7 Nov. 1960.

The Jack Benny Show. CBS. 1950-1964; NBC. 1964-1965.

Julia. NBC. 1968-1971.

“The Key to the Killer.” The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC. 31 Oct. 1960.

The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp. ABC. 1955-1961.

“Little Big Mouth.” The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC. 8 May 1961.

The Loretta Young Show. NBC. 1953-1961.

Mad Men. AMC (American Movie Classics). 2007- ongoing.

“A Man’s Game.” The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC. 3 July 1961.

“The Miraculous Journey of Tadpole Chan.” The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC. 14 Nov. 1960.

“My Son, My Son.” The Big Valley. ABC. 3 Nov. 1965.

My Three Sons. ABC. 1960-1965; CBS. 1965-1972.

“My Uncle O’Moore.” The Loretta Young Show. NBC. 8 Sep. 1955.

“The Odyssey of Jubal Tanner.” The Big Valley. ABC. 13 Oct. 1965.

“Pursuit.” The Big Valley. ABC. 10 Oct. 1966.

Rawhide. CBS. 1959-1966.

“Teacher of Outlaws.” The Big Valley. ABC. 2 Feb. 1966.

The Thorn Birds. ABC. 27 Mar.-30 Mar. 1983.

“Triple C.” The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC. 22 May 1961.

The Untouchables. ABC. 1959-1963.

The Virginian. NBC. 1962-1971.

Wagon Train. NBC. 1957-1962; ABC. 1962-1965.

“The Waiting Game.” The Loretta Young Show. NBC. 9 Oct. 1955.

Zane Grey Theater. CBS. 1956-1961.

Radio Programmes

Command Performance. AFRS (Armed Forces Radio Network). 1942-1950.

Jack Benny Program. NBC. 1932-1948; CBS. 1948-1955.

“The Lady Eve.” Lux Radio Theatre. CBS. 9 Mar. 1942.

LUX Radio Theatre. NBC. 1934-1935; CBS. 1935-1955.

“Remember the Night.” Lux Radio Theatre. CBS. 25 Mar. 1940.

Screen Director’s Playhouse. NBC. 1949-1951.

“Smilin’ Through.” Lux Radio Theatre. CBS. 29 Apr. 1940.

“Sorry, Wrong Number.” Lux Radio Theatre. CBS. 9 Jan. 1950.

“This Above All.” Lux Radio Theatre. CBS. 14 Sept. 1942.

“Wuthering Heights.” Lux Radio Theatre. CBS. 18 Sept. 1939.

Appendix A

Stanwyck Filmography

Broadway Nights. Dir. Joseph C. Boyle. Perf. Lois Wilson, Sam Hardy, Louis John Bartels.
First National Pictures, 1927.

The Locked Door. Dir. George Fitzmaurice. Perf. Rod La Rocque, Barbara Stanwyck, William Boyd. United Artists, 1929.

Mexicali Rose. Dir. Erle C. Kenton. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Sam Hardy, William Janney.
Columbia Pictures, 1929.

Ladies of Leisure. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Ralph Graves, Lowell Sherman.
Columbia Pictures, 1930.

Illicit. Dir. Archie Mayo. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, James Rennie, Charles Butterworth. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1931.

Ten Cents a Dance. Dir. Lionel Barrymore. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Ricardo Cortez, Monroe Owsley. Columbia Pictures, 1931.

The Miracle Woman. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, David Manners, Sam Hardy.
Columbia Pictures, 1931.

Night Nurse. Dir. William A. Wellman. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Ben Lyon, Joan Blondell.
Warner Bros. Pictures, 1931.

Forbidden. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Adolphe Menjou, Ralph Bellamy.
Columbia Pictures, 1932.

Shopworn. Dir. Nicholas Grinde. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Regis Toomey, ZaSu Pitts. Columbia Pictures, 1932.

So Big. Dir. William A. Wellman. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, George Brent, Dickie Moore.
Warner Bros. Pictures, 1932.

The Purchase Price. Dir. William A. Wellman. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, George Brent, Lyle Talbot. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1932.

The Bitter Tea of General Yen. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Nils Asther, Toshia Mori. Columbia Pictures, 1933.

Ladies They Talk About. Dir. William Keighley and Howard Bretherton. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Preston Foster, Lyle Talbot. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1933.

Baby Face. Dir. Alfred E. Green. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, George Brent, Donald Cook. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1933.

Ever in My Heart. Dir. Archie Mayo. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Otto Kruger, Ralph Bellamy. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1933.

Gambling Lady. Dir. Archie Mayo. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, Pat O'Brien. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1934.

A Lost Lady. Dir. Alfred E. Green. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Frank Morgan, Ricardo Cortez. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1934.

The Secret Bride. Dir. William Dieterle. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Warren William, Glenda Farrell. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1934.

The Woman in Red. Dir. Robert Florey. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Gene Raymond, Genevieve Tobin. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1935.

Red Salute. Dir. Sidney Lanfield. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Young, Hardie Albright. United Artists, 1935.

Annie Oakley. Dir. George Stevens. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Preston Foster, Melvyn Douglas. RKO Radio Pictures, 1935.

A Message to Garcia. Dir. George Marshall. Perf. Wallace Beery, Barbara Stanwyck, John Boles. Twentieth Century-Fox Film, 1936.

The Bride Walks Out. Dir. Leigh Jason. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Gene Raymond, Robert Young. RKO Radio Pictures, 1936.

His Brother's Wife. Dir. W.S. Van Dyke. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Taylor, Jean Hersholt. MGM, 1936.

Banjo on My Knee. Dir. John Cromwell. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, Walter Brennan. Twentieth Century-Fox Film, 1936.

The Plough and the Stars. Dir. John Ford. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Preston Foster, Barry Fitzgerald. RKO Radio Pictures, 1937.

Internes Can't Take Money. Dir. Alfred Santell. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, Lloyd Nolan. Paramount Pictures, 1937.

This is My Affair. Dir. William A. Seiter. Perf. Robert Taylor, Barbara Stanwyck, Victor McLaglen. Twentieth Century-Fox Film, 1937.

Stella Dallas. Dir. King Vidor. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, John Boles, Anne Shirley. United Artists, 1937.

Breakfast for Two. Dir. Alfred Santell. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Herbert Marshall, Glenda Farrell. RKO Radio Pictures, 1937.

Always Goodbye. Dir. Sidney Lanfield. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Herbert Marshall, Ian Hunter. Twentieth Century-Fox Film, 1938.

The Mad Miss Manton. Dir. Leigh Jason. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Henry Fonda, Sam Levene. RKO Radio Pictures, 1938.

Union Pacific. Dir. Cecil B. DeMille. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, Akim Tamiroff. Paramount Pictures, 1939.

Golden Boy. Dir. Rouben Mamoulian. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Adolphe Menjou, William Holden. Columbia Pictures, 1939.

Remember the Night. Dir. Mitchell Leisen. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray, Beulah Bondi. Paramount Pictures, 1940.

The Lady Eve. Dir. Preston Sturges. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Henry Fonda, Charles Coburn. Paramount Pictures, 1941.

Meet John Doe. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, Edward Arnold. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1941.

You Belong to Me. Dir. Wesley Ruggles. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Henry Fonda, Edgar Buchanan. Columbia Pictures, 1941.

The Great Man's Lady. Dir. William A. Wellman. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, Brian Donlevy. Paramount Pictures, 1942.

Ball of Fire. Dir. Howard Hawks. Perf. Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, Oscar Homolka. RKO Radio Pictures, 1942.

The Gay Sisters. Dir. Irving Rapper. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, George Brent, Geraldine Fitzgerald. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1942.

Lady of Burlesque. Dir. William A. Wellman. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Michael O'Shea, Iris Adrian. United Artists, 1943.

Flesh and Fantasy. Dir. Julien Duvivier. Perf. Edward G. Robinson, Charles Boyer, Barbara Stanwyck. Universal Pictures, 1943.

Double Indemnity. Dir. Billy Wilder. Perf. Fred MacMurray, Barbara Stanwyck, Edward G. Robinson. Paramount Pictures, 1944.

Hollywood Canteen. Dir. Delmer Daves. Perf. Andrews Sisters, Jack Benny, Joe E. Brown. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1944.

Christmas in Connecticut. Dir. Peter Godfrey. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Dennis Morgan, Sydney Greenstreet. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1945.

My Reputation. Dir. Curtis Bernhardt. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, George Brent, Warner Anderson. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1946.

The Bride Wore Boots. Dir. Irving Pichel. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Cummings, Diana Lynn. Paramount Pictures, 1946.

The Strange Love of Martha Ivers. Dir. Lewis Milestone. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Van Heflin, Elizabeth Scott. Paramount Pictures, 1946.

California. Dir. John Farrow. Perf. Ray Milland, Barbara Stanwyck, Barry Fitzgerald. Paramount Pictures, 1947.

The Two Mrs. Carrolls. Dir. Peter Godfrey. Perf. Humphrey Bogart, Barbara Stanwyck, Alexis Smith. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1947.

The Other Love. Dir. André de Toth. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, David Niven, Richard Conte. United Artists, 1947.

Variety Girl. Dir. George Marshall. Perf. Mary Hatcher, Olga San Juan, DeForest Kelley. Paramount Pictures, 1947.

Cry Wolf. Dir. Peter Godfrey. Perf. Errol Flynn, Barbara Stanwyck, Geraldine Brooks. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1947.

B. F.'s Daughter. Dir. Robert Z. Leonard. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Van Heflin, Charles Coburn. MGM, 1948.

Sorry, Wrong Number. Dir. Anatole Litvak. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Burt Lancaster, Ann Richards. Paramount Pictures, 1948.

The Lady Gambles. Dir. Michael Gordon. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Preston, Steven McNally. Universal Pictures, 1949.

The File on Thelma Jordon. Dir. Robert Siodmak. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Wendell Corey, Paul Kelly. Paramount Pictures, 1950.

East Side, West Side. Dir. Mervyn LeRoy. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, James Mason, Van Heflin. MGM, 1950.

No Man of Her Own. Dir. Mitchell Leisen. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, John Lund, Jane Cowl. Paramount Pictures, 1950.

The Furies. Dir. Anthony Mann. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Wendell Corey, Walter Huston. Paramount Pictures, 1950.

To Please a Lady. Dir. Clarence Brown. Perf. Clark Gable, Barbara Stanwyck, Adolphe Menjou. MGM, 1950.

The Man with a Cloak. Dir. Fletcher Markle. Perf. Joseph Cotton, Barbara Stanwyck, Louis Calhern. MGM, 1951.

Clash by Night. Dir. Fritz Lang. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Paul Douglas, Robert Ryan. RKO Radio Pictures, 1952.

Jeopardy. Dir. John Sturges. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Barry Sullivan, Ralph Meeker. MGM, 1953.

Titanic. Dir. Jean Negulesco. Perf. Clifton Webb, Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Wagner. Twentieth Century-Fox Film, 1953.

All I Desire. Dir. Douglas Sirk. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Richard Carlson, Lyle Bettger. Universal Pictures, 1953.

The Moonlighter. Dir. Roy Rowland. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray, Ward Bond. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1953.

Blowing Wild. Dir. Hugo Fregonese. Perf. Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, Ruth Roman.
Warner Bros. Pictures, 1953.

Witness to Murder. Dir. Roy Rowland. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, George Sanders, Gary Merrill.
United Artists, 1954.

Executive Suite. Dir. Robert Wise. Perf. William Holden, June Allyson, Barbara Stanwyck.
MGM, 1954.

Cattle Queen of Montana. Dir. Allan Dwan. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Ronald Reagan, Gene
Evans. RKO Radio Pictures, 1954.

The Violent Men. Dir. Rudolph Maté. Perf. Glenn Ford, Barbara Stanwyck, Edward G.
Robinson. Columbia Pictures, 1955.

Escape to Burma. Dir. Allan Dwan. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Ryan, David Farrar. RKO
Radio Pictures, 1955.

There's Always Tomorrow. Dir. Douglas Sirk. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray, Joan
Bennett. Universal Pictures, 1956.

The Maverick Queen. Dir. Joe Kane. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Barry Sullivan, Scott Brady.
Republic Pictures, 1956.

These Wilder Years. Dir. Roy Rowland. Perf. James Cagney, Barbara Stanwyck, Walter
Pidgeon. MGM, 1956.

Crime of Passion. Dir. Gerd Oswald. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Sterling Hayden, Raymond Burr.
United Artists, 1957.

Trooper Hook. Dir. Charles Marquis Warren. Perf. Joel McCrea, Barbara Stanwyck, Earl
Holliman. United Artists, 1957.

Forty Guns. Dir. Samuel Fuller. Perf. Barbara Stanwyck, Barry Sullivan, Dean Jagger.
Twentieth Century-Fox Film, 1957.

Walk on the Wild Side. Dir. Edward Dmytryk. Perf. Laurence Harvey, Capucine, Jane Fonda.
Columbia Pictures, 1962.

Roustabout. Dir. John Rich. Perf. Elvis Presley, Barbara Stanwyck, Joan Freeman. Paramount
Pictures, 1964.

The Night Walker. Dir. William Castle. Perf. Robert Taylor, Barbara Stanwyck, Judi Meredith.
Universal Pictures, 1964.

Television Programmes, Mini-Series, and Made-for-Television Films

(Television appearances until 1965 taken from a list provided by Stanwyck's PR agent Helen Ferguson [Barbara Stanwyck Biography by Helen Ferguson PR, April 1965, Jack Hirshberg Papers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences]).

"Gaslight." The Jack Benny Show. Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). 27 Jan. 1952.

"My Uncle O'Moore." The Loretta Young Show. National Broadcasting Company (NBC). 8 Sept. 1955.

"The Waiting Game." The Loretta Young Show. NBC. 9 Oct. 1955.

"Sudden Silence." Ford Theatre. American Broadcasting Company (ABC). 10 Oct. 1956.

"Three Years Dark." Alcoa Theatre. NBC. 23 June 1958.

"Trail to Nowhere." Zane Grey Theater. CBS. 2 Oct. 1958.

"Autolight." The Jack Benny Show. CBS. 11 Jan. 1959.

"Hang the Heart High." Zane Grey Theater. CBS. 15 Jan. 1959.

"The Lone Woman." Zane Grey Theater. CBS. 8 Oct. 1959.

The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC. 1960-1961.

"The Maud Frazer Story." Wagon Train. NBC. 11 Oct. 1961.

"Star-Witness: The Lili Parrish Story." General Electric Theater. CBS. 8 Nov. 1961.

"The Captain's Wife." Rawhide. CBS. 12 Jan. 1962.

"Special Assignment." The Dick Powell Show. CBS. 25 Sept. 1962.

"The Caroline Casteel Story." Wagon Train. ABC. 26 Sept. 1962.

"Elegy." The Untouchables. ABC. 20 Nov. 1962.

"Search for a Dead Man." The Untouchables. ABC. 1 Jan. 1963.

“The Molly Kincaid Story.” Wagon Train. ABC. 16 Sept. 1963.

“The Kate Crawley Story.” Wagon Train. ABC. 27 Jan. 1964.

Calhoun: County Agent. Unaired pilot episode. Jackie Cooper Productions and UA-TV. 1964.

The Big Valley. ABC. 1965-1969.

The House That Would Not Die. Made-for-television film. Dir. John Llewellyn Moxey. ABC. 27 Oct. 1970.

A Taste of Evil. Made-for-television film. Dir. John Llewellyn Moxey. ABC. 12 Oct. 1971.

The Letters. Made-for-television film. Dir. Paul Krasny and Gene Nelson. ABC. 6 Mar. 1973.

“Toni’s Boys.” Charlie’s Angels. ABC. 2 Apr. 1980.

The Thorn Birds. Mini-series. ABC. 27 Mar-30 Mar. 1983.

“The Californians.” Dynasty. ABC. 9 Oct. 1985.

“The Man.” Dynasty. ABC. 16 Oct. 1985.

“The Titans.” Dynasty. ABC. 13 Nov. 1985.

The Colbys. ABC. 1985-1987.

Appendix B

Stanwyck's Agents

Agent	Agency	Dates
Arthur Lyons	A. & S. Lyons	- 1935 ¹
Zeppo Marx	Zeppo Marx, Inc.	1935 - ²
Alan Miller	Zeppo Marx, Inc.	1943 - 1945 ³
Alan Miller	Marx, Miller, and Marx	1945 - 1947 ⁴
Alan Miller	Music Corporation of America (MCA)	1947 - ⁵
Paul Small	Paul Small Artists	1952 - 1954 ⁶
?	Jaffe Agency	1954 - 1958 ⁷
Norman Brokaw	William Morris Agency	1958 - ⁸
Sy Marsh	William Morris Agency	1964 - ⁹

¹ Kemper 265.

² Kemper 265.

³ First mention of Miller as Stanwyck's agent: Jack Karp to William Meiklejohn 13 August 1943, office memo, Double Indemnity file, Paramount Pictures production records, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS).

⁴ First mention of Marx, Miller, and Marx as Stanwyck's agency: contract for California 16 October 1945, Hal Wallis Papers, AMPAS.

⁵ Barbara Stanwyck c/o MCA to Warner Bros. 15 October 1947, letter, Barbara Stanwyck Legal file, Warner Bros. Archives. "Stanwyck, Crawford on MCA Vidpix Agenda at 30G per Stanza." Variety 21 May 1952: 20.

⁶ First mention of Small as Stanwyck's agent: article 25 September 1952, Barbara Stanwyck 1948 file, Hearst Collection. Small died August 1954.

⁷ Article 25 September 1954, Barbara Stanwyck 1948 file, Hearst Collection.

⁸ First mention of Brokaw as Stanwyck's agent: "Stanwyck Series on WM. Morris Agenda." Variety 5 March 1958: 31.

⁹ First mention of Marsh as Stanwyck's agent: Edward Morse [casting director] to Eugene Frank [attorney] 14 February 1964, office memo, Roustabout file, Paramount Pictures production records, AMPAS.

Appendix C

Stanwyck's Short-Term Contracts

Studio	Dates
Columbia Pictures	1930 - 1932 ¹
Warner Bros. Pictures	1932 - 1934 ²
RKO Pictures	1935 - 1938 ³
Twentieth Century-Fox Film	1935 - 1938 ⁴
Paramount Pictures	1938 - 1940 ⁵
Hal Wallis Productions	1944 - 1950 ⁶
Warner Bros. Pictures	1944 - 1948 ⁷
MGM	1950 - 1952 ⁸

¹ Barbara Stanwyck Legal files, Warner Bros. Archives.

² See note 1.

³ BS Clipping file, Cinema-Television Library, University of Southern California.

⁴ See note 3.

⁵ Paramount Pictures contract summaries, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS).

⁶ Hal Wallis papers, AMPAS.

⁷ See note 1.

⁸ Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Legal Department collection, AMPAS.

Appendix D

Archives and Collections

United States

Cinema-Television Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles

Barbara Stanwyck Clipping files

Constance McCormick Collection, Cinema-Television Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles

Barbara Stanwyck Scrapbooks

Robert Taylor Scrapbooks

Olivia de Havilland Scrapbooks

Hearst Collection, Special Collections, University of Southern California, Los Angeles

Barbara Stanwyck bibliography files, 1944-47 file, 1948 file

Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Los Angeles

Barbara Stanwyck Biography files

Barbara Stanwyck Scrapbook compiled by Joan Bruce

Fan magazines: Hollywood Studio Magazine, Modern Screen, Movie Classic, Movie Mirror, Movieland, Photoplay, Silver Screen, True Confessions

Gladys Hall papers

Hal Wallis papers

Hedda Hopper papers

Jack Hirshberg papers

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Legal Department collection

Motion Picture Association of America Production Code Administration records

Paramount Pictures contract summaries

Paramount Pictures production files

William H. Wright Collection

Paley Center for Media, Los Angeles and New York

Television programmes: "Elegy," "Gaslight," "The Molly Kincaid Story," "Special Assignment," "Trail to Nowhere"

Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles

Barbara Stanwyck Legal files

Production files for various films

United Kingdom

Barry Wilkinson Collection, Special Collections, University of Sussex, Falmer

Fan magazines: Film Pictorial, Picturegoer

Variety

Special Collections, British Film Institute, London

Press books

Fan magazines: Photoplay, Picturegoer

Variety